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# THEOLOGICAL INSTITUTES:

OR

A View of the



EVIDENCES, DOCTRINES, MORALS AND INSTITUTIONS

OF

CHRISTIANITY.

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BY RICHARD WATSON.

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THEOLOGIÆ autem objectum est *ipse Deus*.—Habent aliæ omnes scientiæ sua objecta, nobilia certe, et digna in quibus humana mens considerandis tempus, otium, et diligentiam adhibeat. Hæc una circa *Ens* entium et *Causam* causarum, circa *Principium* naturæ, et gratiæ in natura existentis, naturæ adsistentis, et naturam circumstantis versatur. Dignissimum itaque *hoc* est *Objectum* et plenum venerandæ Majestatis, præcellensque reliquis.

ARMINIUS.

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VOL. III.

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NEW-YORK,

PUBLISHED BY J. EMORY AND B. WAUGH, FOR THE METHODIST  
EPISCOPAL CHURCH, AT THE CONFERENCE OFFICE,  
14 CROSBY-STREET.

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James Collord, Printer.

1828.



## PART SECOND,

CONTINUED.

### DOCTRINES OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.



#### CHAPTER XXV.

##### EXTENT OF THE ATONEMENT.

WE have already spoken of some of the leading blessings derived to man from the death of Christ, and the conditions on which they are made attainable. Before the remainder are adduced, it may be here a proper place to inquire into the extent of that atonement for sin made by the death of our Saviour, and whether the blessings of justification, regeneration, and adoption, are rendered attainable by all to whom the Gospel is proclaimed.

This inquiry leads us into what is called the Calvinistic controversy ; a controversy which has always been conducted with great ardour, and sometimes with intemperance. I shall endeavour to consider such parts of it as are comprehended in the question before us, with perfect calmness and fairness ; recollecting, on the one hand, how many excellent and learned men have been arranged on each side ; and, on the other, that, whilst all honour is due to great names, the plain and unsophisticated sense of the Word of inspired Truth must alone decide on a subject with respect to which it is not silent.

In the system usually called by the name of Calvinism, and which shall subsequently be exhibited in its different modifications, there are, I think, many great errors ; but they have seldom been held except in connexion with a class of vital truths. By many writers who have attacked this system, the truth which it contains, as well as the error, has often been invaded ; and the assault itself has been not unfrequently conducted on principles exceedingly anti-scriptural, and fatally delusive. These considerations are sufficient to inspire caution. The controversy is a very voluminous one ; and yet no great dexterity is required to exhibit it with clearness in a comparatively small compass. Its essence lies in very limited bounds ; and, according to the plan of this work, the whole question will be tested, first and chiefly, by scriptural authority. High Calvinism, indeed,

affects the mode of reasoning *à priori*, and delights in metaphysics. To some also it gives most delight to see it opposed on the same ground ; and to such disputants it will be much less imposing to resort primarily, and with all simplicity, to the testimony of the Sacred Writings. “It is sometimes complained,” says one, “that the mind is unduly biassed in its judgment, by a continual reference to the authority of the Scriptures. The complaint is just, if the Scriptures are not the Word of God : but if they are, there is an opposite and corresponding danger to be guarded against, that of suffering the mind to be unduly biassed in the study and interpretation of the revealed will of God, by the deductions of unaided reason.”(1)

With respect to the controversy, we may also observe, that it forms a clear case of appeal to the Scriptures : for to whom the benefits of Christ’s death are extended, whether to the whole of our race, or to a part, can be matter of revelation only ; and the sole province of reason is that of interpreting, with fairness, and consistently with the acknowledged principles of that revelation, those parts of it in which the subject is directly or incidentally introduced.

The question before us, put into its most simple form, is, whether our Lord Jesus Christ did so die for all men, as to make salvation attainable by all men ; and the affirmative of this question is, we think, the doctrine of Scripture.

We assume that this is plainly expressed,

1. In all those passages which declare that Christ died “*for all men*,” and speak of his death as an atonement for the sins “*of the whole world*.”

We have already seen, in treating of our Lord’s atonement, in what sense the phrase, to die “*for us*,” must be understood ; that it signifies to die in the place and stead of man, as a sacrificial oblation, by which satisfaction is made for the sins of the individual, so that they become remissible upon the terms of the evangelical covenant. When, therefore, it is said, that Christ “*by the grace of God tasted death for every man* ;” and that “*he is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world* ;” it can only, we think, be fairly concluded from such declarations, and from many other familiar texts, in which the same phraseology is employed, that, by the death of Christ, the sins of every man are rendered remissible, and that salvation is consequently attainable by every man. Again, our Lord calls himself “*the Saviour of the world* ;” and is, by St. Paul, called “*the Saviour of all men*.” John the Baptist points him out as “*the Lamb of God*



which taketh away the sin of *the world*;" and our Lord himself declares, "God so loved *the world*, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that *whosoever* believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life: for God sent not his Son into *the world* to condemn *the world*; but that *the world* through him might be saved." So, also, the apostle Paul, "God was in Christ, reconciling *the world* unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them."

2. In those passages which attribute an equal extent to the effects of the death of Christ as to the effects of the fall of our first parents. "For if through the offence of one *many* be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto *many*." "Therefore, as by the offence of one judgment came upon *all men* to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon *all men* unto justification of life." (2)

As the unlimited extent of Christ's atonement to all mankind, is plainly expressed in the above cited passages, so is it, we also assume, necessarily *implied*,

1. In those which declare that Christ died not only for those that are saved, but for those who do, or may perish; so that it cannot be argued, from the actual condemnation of men, that they were excepted from many actual, and from all the offered, benefits of his death. "And through thy knowledge shall thy weak brother perish, *for whom Christ died*." "Destroy not him with thy meat, *for whom Christ died*." "False teachers, who privily shall bring in *damnable* heresies, even denying the Lord *that bought them*, and bring upon *themselves* swift destruction." So also in the case of the apostates mentioned in the Epistle to the Hebrews, "Of how much sorer

(2) To these might be added, all those passages which ascribe the abolition of bodily death, to Christ, who, in this respect, repairs the effect of the transgression of Adam, which he could only do in consequence of having *redeemed* that body from the power of the grave. This argument may be thus stated. It is taught in Scripture, that *all* shall rise from the dead. It is equally clear from the same authority, that all shall rise in consequence of the interposition of Christ, the second Adam, the representative and Redeemer of man—"as in Adam *all* die, even so in Christ shall *all* be made alive." It follows, therefore, that if the wicked are raised from the dead, it is in consequence of the power which Christ, as Redeemer, acquired over them, and of his right in them. That this resurrection is to them a curse, was not in the purpose of God, but arises from their wilful rejection of the gospel. To be restored to life is in itself a good; that it is turned to an evil is their own fault; and if they are not raised from the dead in consequence of Christ's right in them, acquired by *purchase*, it behoves those of a different opinion to show under what other constitution than that of the gospel, a resurrection of the body is provided for. The original law contains no intimation of this, nor of a general judgment, which latter supposes a suspension of the sentence inconsistent with the strictly legal penalty. "*in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die*."



punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, *wherewith he was sanctified*, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of Grace?" If any dispute should here arise as to the phrase, "*wherewith he was sanctified*," reference may be made to chap. vi, of the same epistle, where the same class of persons, whose doom is pronounced to be inevitable, are said to have been "once enlightened;" to have "tasted of the heavenly gift;" to have been "made partakers of the Holy Ghost;" to have "tasted the good word of God," and "the powers of the world to come:" all which expressions show that they were placed on the same ground with other Christians as to their interest in the new covenant,—a point to which we shall again recur.

2. In all those passages which make it the duty of men to believe the Gospel; and place them under guilt, and the penalty of death, for rejecting it. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but *the wrath of God* abideth on him." "But these are written, that *ye might believe* that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His name." "He that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the Name of the only-begotten Son of God." "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, *shall be damned*." "How shall we escape, if *we neglect* so great salvation?" "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." The plain argument from all such passages is, that the Gospel is commanded to be preached to all men; that it is preached to them that they may believe in Christ, its Author; that this faith is required of them, in order to their salvation,—"*that believing ye may have life through His name*;" that they have power thus to believe to their salvation; (from whatever source, or by whatever means this power is derived to them, need not now be examined: it is plainly supposed; for not to believe, is reckoned to them as a capital crime, for which they are condemned already, and reserved to final condemnation;) and that having power to believe, they have the power to obtain salvation, which, as it can be bestowed only through the merits of Christ's sacrifice, proves that it extends to them. The same conclusion, also, follows from the nature of that faith, which is required by the Gospel, in order to salvation. This, we have already seen, is not mere assent to the doctrine of Christ's

sacrificial death, but personal trust in it as our atonement ; which those, surely, could not be required by a God of truth to exercise, if that atonement did not embrace them. Nor could they be guilty for refusing to trust in that which was never intended to be the object of their trust ; for if God so designed to exclude them from Christ, he could not command *them* to trust in Christ ; and if they are not commanded thus to trust in Christ, they do not violate any command by not believing ; and, in this respect, are innocent.

3. In all those passages in which men's failure to obtain salvation is placed to the account of their own opposing wills, and made wholly their own fault. "How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and *ye would not !*" "And *ye will not come to me* that *ye may have life.*" "Bringing upon themselves swift destruction." "Whosoever *will*, let him take of the water of life freely." It is useless here to multiply quotations, since the New Testament so constantly exhorts men to come to Christ, reproves them for neglect, and threatens them with the penal consequences of their own folly : thus uniformly placing the bar to their salvation, just where Christ places it, in his parable of the supper, in the perverseness of those, who having been *bidden* to the feast, *would not come*. From these premises, then, it follows, that since the Scriptures always attribute the ruin of men's souls to their own will, and not to the will of God ; we ought to seek for no other cause of their condemnation. We can know nothing on this subject but what God has revealed. He has declared that it is not his will that men should perish : on the contrary, "He willeth all men to be saved ;" and therefore, commands us to pray for "all men ;" he has declared, that the reason they are not saved, is not that Christ did not die for them, but that they will not come to him for the "life" which he died to procure for "the world ;" and it must therefore be concluded, that the sole bar to the salvation of all who are lost is in themselves, and not in any such limitation of Christ's redemption, as supposes that they were not comprehended in its efficacy and intention.

It will now be necessary for us to consider what those who have adopted a different opinion have to urge against these plain and literal declarations of Scripture. It is their burthen, that they are compelled to explain these passages in a more limited and qualified sense, than the letter of them and its obvious meaning teaches ; and that they must do this by inference merely ; for it is not even pretended that there is any text whatever to be adduced, which declares as literally, that Christ *did not* die for the salvation of all, as those

which declare that he did so die. We have no passages, therefore, to examine, which, in their clear literal meaning, stand opposed to those which we have quoted, so as to present apparent contradictions which require to be reconciled by concession on one side or the other. This is at least, *prima facie*, strongly in favour of those who hold that, in the same sense, and with the same design, "Jesus Christ tasted death for every man."

To our first class of texts it is objected, that the terms "*all men*," and "*the world*," are sometimes used in Scripture in a limited sense.

This may be granted, without injury to the argument drawn from the texts in question. But though in Scripture, as in common language, *all*, and *every*, and such universals, are occasionally used with limitation when the connexion prevents any misunderstanding; yet they are, nevertheless, strictly universal terms, and are most frequently used as such. The true question is, whether, in the places above cited, they can be understood except in the largest sense; whether "*all men*," and "*the world*," can be interpreted of the elect only, that is of some men of all countries.

We may very confidently deny this,

1. Because the universal sense of the terms, "*all*," and "*all men*," and "*every man*," is confirmed, either by the context of the passages in which they occur, or by other Scriptures. When Isaiah says, "All we like sheep have *gone* astray; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us *all*;" he affirms that the iniquity of all those who have gone astray, was laid on Christ. When St. Paul says, "We thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead;" he argues the universality of spiritual death, from the universality of the means adopted for raising men to spiritual life: a plain proof that it was received as an undisputed principle in the primitive church, that Christ's dying for all men was to be taken in its utmost latitude, or it could not have been made the basis of the argument. When the same apostle calls Christ the "Saviour of all men, and especially of those that believe," he manifestly includes both believers and unbelievers, that is, all mankind, in the term "*all men*;" and declares, that Christ is their Saviour, though the full benefits of his salvation are received through faith only by them that believe. When again he declares that, "as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; *EVEN* so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men, (*εἰς*) in order to justification of life;" the force of the comparison is lost if the term "*all men*," is not taken in its full extent; for the apostle is thus made to say, as by the offence of one, judgment came upon *ALL MEN*; *EVEN* so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon *A FEW*



MEN. Nor can it be objected, that the apostle uses the terms, "many," and "all men," indiscriminately in this chapter ; for there is in this no contradiction, and the objection is in our favour. All men are many, though many are not in every case all. But the term, "many," is taken by him in the sense of all, as appears from the following parallels : "death passed upon *all men* ;" "*many* be dead ;" "the gift by grace hath abounded unto *many* ;" "the free gift came upon *all men*." "By one man's disobedience *many* were made (constituted) sinners," made liable to death ; "so by the obedience of one shall *many* be made (constituted) righteous." On the last passage we may observe that, "many," or "the many," must mean all men in the first clause ; nor is it to be restricted in the second, as though, by being "made righteous," actual personal justification were to be understood ; for the apostle is not speaking of believers individually, but of mankind collectively, and the opposite conditions in which *the race* itself is placed by the offence of Adam and the obedience of Christ in all its generations.

It is equally impracticable to restrict the phrases, "the world," "the whole world ;" and to paraphrase them the "world of the elect :;" and yet there is no other alternative ; for either "the whole world" means those elected out of it ; or else Christ died in an equal sense for every man. "God so loved *the world*, that he gave his only-begotten Son," &c. Here, if the world mean not the elect only, but every man, then every man was "so loved" by God, that he gave his own Son for his redemption. To say that the world, in a few places, means the Roman empire, and in others Judea, is nothing to the purpose, unless it were meant to affirm, that the elect were the people of Judea, or those of the Roman empire only. It proves, it is true, a hyperbolical use of the term in both instances ; but this cannot be urged in the case before us : for,

1. The elect are never called "the world" in Scripture ; but are distinguished from it. "I have chosen you out of the world ; therefore the world hateth you."

2. The common division of mankind, in the New Testament, is only into two parts ; the disciples of Christ, and "the world." "If ye were of the world, the world would love its own." "Ye are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." "We know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness."

3. When the redemption of Christ is spoken of, it often includes both those who had been chosen out of the world, and those who remained still of the world. "And *you* hath he reconciled," say the apostles to those that had already believed ; and as to the rest, "God was in Christ, reconciling *the world* unto himself, not imput-

ing their trespasses unto them ; and hath committed to us the word of reconciliation," plainly that they might beseech this "world" to be reconciled to God : so that both believers and unbelievers were interested in the reconciling ministry, and the work of Christ. "And he is the propitiation for *our* sins, and not for ours only ; but also for the sins of *the whole world*." words cannot make the case plainer than these, since this same writer, in the same epistle, makes it evident how he uses the term "world," when he affirms that "*the world* lieth in wickedness," in contradistinction to those who knew that they were "of God."

4. In the general commission before quoted, the expression "world" is connected with universal terms which carry it forth into its utmost latitude of meaning. "Go ye into ALL the world, and preach the Gospel (the good news) to *every creature* ;" and this too in order to his believing it, that he may be saved ; "he that believeth shall be saved ; and he that believeth not (this good news preached to him that he might be saved) shall be damned."

5. All this is confirmed from the gross absurdity of this restricted interpretation when applied to several of the foregoing passages. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that *whosoever* believeth in him should not perish." Now, if the world here means the elect world, or the elect not yet called out of it, then it is affirmed, that "*whosoever*," of this elect body, believeth shall not perish ; which plainly implies, that some of the elect might not believe, and therefore perish, contrary to their doctrine. This absurd consequence is still clearer from the verses which immediately follow. John iii, 17, 18, "For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world ; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned : but he that believeth not is condemned already." Now here we must take the term "world," either extensively for all mankind, or limitedly for the elect. If the former, then all men "through him may be saved," but only through faith : he, therefore, of this world that believeth may be saved ; but he of this world that believeth not is condemned already." The sense is here plain and consistent ; but if, on the other hand, we take "the world" to mean the elect only, then he of this elect world that believeth may be saved, and he of the elect world that "believeth not is condemned ;" so that the restricted interpretation necessarily supposes that elect persons may remain in unbelief, and be lost. The same absurdity will follow from a like interpretation of the general commission. Either "all the world" and "every creature" mean every man, or the elect only. If the former, it follows, that he of this "world," any indi-

vidual among those included in the phrase, "every creature," who believes, "shall be saved," or, not believing, "shall be damned:" if the latter, then he of the elect, any individual of the elect, who believes, "shall be saved," and any individual of the elect who believes not, "shall be damned." Similar absurdities might be brought out from other passages; but if these are candidly weighed, it will abundantly appear, that texts so plain and explicit cannot be turned into such consequences by any true method of interpretation, and that they must, therefore, be taken in their obvious sense, which unequivocally expresses the universality of the atonement.

It has been urged, indeed, that our Lord himself says, John xvii, 9, "I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me." But will they here interpret "the world" to be the world of the elect? if so, they cut even them off from the prayers of Christ. But if by "the world" they would have us understand the world of the non-elect, then they will find that all the prayers which our Lord puts up for those whom "the Father hath given him," had this end, "that they," the non-elect "'world,' may believe that thou hast sent me," verse 21: let them choose either side of the alternative. The meaning of this passage is, however, made obvious by the context. Christ, in the former part of his intercession, as recorded in this chapter, prays exclusively, not for his church in all ages, but for his disciples then present with him; as appears plain from verse 12, "While I was *with them in the world*, I kept them in thy name:" but he was only *with* his first disciples, and for them he exclusively prays in the first instance; then, in verse 20, he prays for all who, in future, should believe on him through their words; and he does this in order that "the world might believe." Thus "the world," in its largest sense, is not cut off, but expressly included in the benefits of this prayer.

John x, 15, "I lay down my life for the sheep," is also adduced, to prove that Christ died for none but his sheep. But the consequence will not hold; for there is no inconsistency between his having died for them that believe, and also for them that believe not. Christ is said to be "the Saviour of all men, and especially of them that believe;" two propositions which the apostle held to be perfectly consistent. The very context shows that Christ laid down his life for others besides those whom, in that passage, he calls "the sheep." The sheep here intended, as the discourse will show, were those of the Jewish "fold;" for he immediately adds, "other sheep I have, which are not of this fold," clearly meaning the Gentiles: "them must I bring." He, therefore, laid down his life for them also; for the sheep in the fold, who "knew his voice and followed



him," and for them out of the fold, who still needed "bringing in;" even for "*the lost*, whom he came to seek and save," which is the character of all mankind: "all we like sheep have gone astray;" and "the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all."

A restrictive interpretation of the first two classes of texts we have quoted above, may then be affirmed directly and expressly to contradict the plainest declarations of God's own word. For, it is not true, upon this interpretation, that God loved "the world," if the majority he loved not; nor is it true, that Christ was not "sent to condemn the world," if he was sent even to enhance its condemnation; nor that the Gospel, as the Gospel, can be preached "to every creature," if to the majority it cannot be preached as "good tidings of great joy to all people;" for it is sad and doleful tidings, if the greater part of the human race are shut out from the mercies of their Creator. If, then, in this interpretation there is so palpable a contradiction of the words of inspiration itself, the system which is built upon it cannot be sustained.

As to the texts which we have urged, as necessarily implying the unrestricted extent of the death of Christ, the usual answers to those which speak of Christ having died for them that perish, may be briefly examined. "Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died," Rom. xiv, 15. Him, says Poole, (4) for whom, "in the judgment of charity," we are to presume Christ died. To say nothing of the danger of such unlicensed paraphrases, in the interpretation of Scripture, it is obvious that this exposition, entirely annuls the motive by which the apostle enforces his exhortation. Why are we not to be an occasion of sin to our brother? The answer is, lest we "destroy him;" and, in the parallel place, 1 Cor. viii, 11, lest "he perish." But what is the aggravation of the offence? truly that "Christ died for him;" and so we have no tenderness for a soul on whom Christ had so much compassion as to die for his salvation. Let the text then be tried, as paraphrased by Poole and other Calvinists: "Destroy not him, for whom, in the judgment of charity, it may be concluded, Christ died;" and it turns the motive the other way. For if I admit that none can be destroyed for whom Christ died, then, in proportion to the charity of my judgment, that any individual is of this number, I may be the less cautious of ensnaring his conscience in indifferent matters; since at least, this is certain, that he cannot perish, and I cannot be guilty of the aggravated offence of destroying him who was an object of the compassion of Christ. Who can suppose that the apostle would thus counteract his own design? or that he should seriously admon-



ish his readers not to do that which was impossible if, in fact, he taught them that Christ died only for the elect ; and that they for whom he died, could never perish ? Another commentator, of the same school, explains this as a caution against doing that which had a “*tendency* to the ruin of one for whom Christ died ; not that it implies, that the weak brother would actually perish.”(5) But in this case, also, as it is assumed, that it was a doctrine taught by St. Paul and received by the churches to whom he wrote, that the elect could not perish, the motive is taken away upon which the admonition is grounded. For if the persons, to whom the apostle wrote, knew that the weak brother, for whom Christ died, could not perish, then nothing which they could do had any “*tendency*” to destroy him. It might injure him, disturb his mind, lead him into sin, destroy his comforts ; all, or any of which, would have been appropriate motives on which to have urged the caution : but nothing can have even a tendency to *destroy* him whose salvation is fixed by an unalterable decree. Mr. Scott is, however, evidently, not satisfied with his own interpretation ; and gives a painful example of the influence of a preconceived system in commenting upon Scripture, by charging the apostle himself with careless writing. “We may, however, observe, that the apostles did not write in that exact systematical style, which some affect, otherwise they would *scrupulously have avoided such expressions.*” This is rather in the manner of Priestley and Belsham, than that of an orthodox commentator ; but it does homage to the force of truth by turning away from it, and by tacitly acknowledging that the Scriptures cannot be Calvinistically interpreted. The same commentators, following, as they do, in the train of the Calvinistic divines in general, may furnish, also, the answer to the argument, from 2 Pet. ii, 1, “Denying the Lord that bought them, and bringing upon themselves swift destruction.” Poole gives us three interpretations : the first is, “The Lord that bought Israel out of Egypt ;” as though St. Peter could be speaking of the Mosaic, and not of the Christian Redemption ; and as though the Judaizing teachers, supposing the apostle to speak of them, denied the God of the Jews, when it was their object to set up his religion against that of Christ. The second is, that “they were bought,” or redeemed, by Christ, from temporal death, their lives having been spared : but we have no such doctrine in Scripture, as that the long suffering of wicked men, procured by Christ’s Redemption, is unconnected in its intent with their eternal salvation. The barren fig tree was spared at the intercession of Christ, that means might be taken with it, to make it fruitful ; and in this same

epistle of St. Peter, he teaches us to “account the long suffering of the Lord *salvation* ;” meaning, doubtless, in its tendency and intention. To this we may add, that there is nothing in the context to warrant this notion of mere temporal redemption. The third interpretation is, “that they denied the Lord, whom *they professed* to have bought them.” This also is gratuitous, and gives a very different sense from that which the words of the apostle convey. But it is argued, that the offence would be the same in denying Christ, whether he really died for them, or that they had professed to believe he died for them. Certainly not. Their crime, as it is put by the apostle, is not the denying of their former profession, or denying Christ, whom they formerly professed to have bought them ; but denying Christ, who had actually bought them, and whom, for that reason, they ought never to have denied, but confessed at the hazard of their lives. Farther, if they merely denied that which they formerly professed, namely, that Christ had bought them, and, in point of fact, he never did buy them, they were in error when they professed to believe that he bought them, and spoke the truth only when they denied it ; and if it be said, that they knew not but he had bought them, when they denied him, this might be a reason for their not being rewarded for renouncing an error, as being done unwittingly ; but can be no reason for their being punished, though unwittingly they went back to the truth of the case. There can be no great guilt in our denying Christ, if Christ never died for us.

Mr. Scott partly adopts, and partly rejects Poole’s solution of this scriptural difficulty. But as he charged St. Paul with want of exactness in writing to the Romans, so also St. Peter, in the passage before us, comes in for his share of the same censure. “It was not the manner of the sacred writers, to express themselves with that systematic exactness, which many now affect.” The question is not, however, one of systematic exactness ; but of common intelligible writing. Mr. Scott’s observation on this passage, is, that Christ’s ransom was of infinite sufficiency ; and the proposal of it, in Scripture, general ; so that men are addressed according to their profession : but that Christ only *intended* to redeem those, whom he foresaw would eventually be saved.”(6) On this we may remark, 1. That the sufficiency of Christ’s Redemption, is not in question ; but the Redemption itself of these deniers of Christ : he is called “the Lord *that bought* them.” In that sufficiency, too, Mr. Scott affirms, in fact, that they had no interest ; for Christ did not “intend to redeem them ;” on this showing, therefore, the Lord did not

“buy them,” which contradicts the apostle. 2. That the “proposal of the benefits of Christ’s Redemption is general;” and that men are addressed, accordingly, as those who are interested in it: we grant, and feel how well this accords with the doctrine of general Redemption; but the difficulty lies with those who hold the limitation of Christ’s Redemption to the elect only, to explain, not merely how it is that men are addressed generally; but how the sins of those who perish, can be aggravated by the circumstance of Christ’s having bought them, if he did not buy them; and how they can be punished for rejecting him, if they could never receive him, so as to be saved by him. This aggravation of their offence, by the circumstance of Christ having bought them, is the doctrine of the text, of the force of which the above interpretations are manifest evasions.

We come now to the case of the apostates, mentioned in the Epistle to the Hebrews, vi, 4–8, and x, 26–31. With respect to these passages, it is agreed that they speak of the ultimate and eternal condemnation and rejection of the persons mentioned in them. The question then is, whether Christ died for them, as he died for such as persevere? which is to be determined by another question, whether they were ever true believers, and had received saving grace? If this be allowed, the proposition is established, that Christ died for them that perish; but in order to arrest this conclusion, all Calvinistic divines agree in denying that the persons referred to by the apostle, and against whom his terrible denunciations are directed, were ever true believers, or capable of becoming such; and here again we have another pregnant instance of the violence done to the obvious meaning of the word of God, through the influence of a preconceived system. For,

1. It will not be denied, that the Hebrews to whom the epistle was addressed, were, in the main at least, true believers; and that the passages in question were written to preserve them from apostasy; of which the rejection, and hopeless punishment, described by the apostle, is represented as the consequence. But if St. Paul had taught them, as he must have done, if Calvinism be the doctrine of the New Testament, that they never could so fall away, and so perish, this was no warning at all to them. To suppose he held out that as a terror, which he knew to be impossible, and had taught them also to be impossible, is the first absurdity which the Calvinistic interpretation involves.

2. It will not be denied, that he speaks of these wretched apostates, as deterring examples to the true believers amongst the Hebrews; but as such apostates never were believers, and were



not even rendered capable, by the grace of God, of becoming such, they could not be admonitory examples. To assume that the apostle, for the sake of argument and admonition, supposes believers to be in the same circumstances and case as those who never were, and never could be believers, and when he had instructed them that their cases could never be similar, is the second absurdity.

3. The apostates in question are represented, by the apostle, "as falling away" from "repentance," and from Christ's "sacrifice for sins." The advocates of the system of partial redemption, affirm, that they fell away only from their profession of repentance and doctrinal belief of Christ's sacrifice for sins, in which they never had, and never could have, any interest. Yet the apostle places the hopelessness of their state on the impossibility of "renewing them *again* to repentance;" which proves that he considered their first repentance genuine and evangelical; because the absence of such a repentance, as they had at first, is given as the reason of the hopelessness of their condition. He moreover heightens the case, by alleging, that there remained "no more sacrifice for sins;" which as plainly proves that, before their apostasy, there was a sacrifice for their sins, and that they had only cut themselves off from its benefits by "wilfully" renouncing it; in other words, that Christ died for them, and that they had placed themselves out of the reach of the benefit of his death, by this one act of aggravated apostasy. The contrast lies between a hopeful and a hopeless case. Theirs was once a hopeful case, because they had "repented," and because there was then a "sacrifice for sins;" afterwards it became hopeless, because it was "impossible to renew them *again* unto repentance," and the sacrifice for sin no more remained for them: they had not only renounced their profession of it; but had renounced the sacrifice itself, by renouncing Christianity. Now, so to interpret the apostle, as to make him describe the awful condition of apostates, as a "falling away" into a state of hopelessness, when, if Calvinism be the doctrine of the New Testament, their case was never really hopeful, but was as hopeless, as to their eternal salvation, before as after their apostasy, is the third absurdity.

4. But it is plain that theirs had been a state of actual salvation, which could only result from their having had an interest in the death of Christ. The proof of this lies in what the apostle affirms of the previous state of those who had finally apostatized, or might so apostatize. They were "enlightened;" this, the whole train of Calvinistic commentators tell us, means a mere speculative reception of the doctrine of the Gospel; they had "tasted of the heavenly gift," and of "the good word of God;" that is, say Poole and

others, "they tasted, not digested; they had superficial relishes of joy and peace," and are to be compared "to the stony ground hearers, who received the word with joy." "And were made partakers of the Holy Ghost;" that is, say some commentators of this class, in his operations, "trying how far a natural man may be raised, and not have his nature changed:" (7) others, "by the communication of miraculous powers." They had "tasted of the powers of the world to come;" that is, they had felt the powerful doctrines of the Gospel, but as all reprobates may feel them, sometimes powerfully convincing their judgment, at others troubling their consciences. "All these things," says Scott, (8) "often take place in the hearts and consciences of men, who yet continue unregenerate." These interpretations are undoubtedly forced upon these authors by the system they have adopted; but it unfortunately happens for them, that the apostle uses no term less strong in describing the religious experience of these apostates than he does in speaking of that of true believers. They were "*enlightened*," is said of these apostates, "the eyes of your understanding being *enlightened*," is said of the Ephesians; and "being turned from darkness to light" is the characteristic of all believers. The apostates "tasted the heavenly *gift*;" this, too, is affirmed of true believers, "much more they which receive abundance of grace, and of the *gift* of righteousness, shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ," Rom. v, 17. To be made "partakers of the Holy Ghost," is also the common distinctive character of all true Christians. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his;" "but ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you." "To *taste* the heavenly gift" and "the good word of God," is also made the mark of true Christianity: "if so be ye have *tasted* that the Lord is gracious." Finally, "the *powers* of the world to come;" that is, of the Gospel dispensation, or the power of the Gospel, stand in precisely the same case. This Gospel is the "*power* of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." Since, then, the apostle expresses the prior experience of these apostates, by the same terms and phrases as those by which he designates the work of God in the hearts of those whose Christianity is, by all, acknowledged to be genuine, where is the authority on which these commentators make him describe, not a saving work in the hearts of these apostates, during the time they held fast their profession, but a simulated one? They have clearly no authority for this at all; and their comments arise not out of the argument of St. Paul, nor out of his terms or phrases, or the connexion of these passages

(7) POOLE in loc.

(8) Notes

with the rest of the discourse ; but out of their own theological system alone ; in other words, out of a mere human opinion which supplies a meaning to the apostle, of which he gives not the most distant intimation. To make the apostle describe the falling away from a mere profession unaccompanied with a state of grace, by terms which he is constantly using to describe and characterize a state of grace, is the fourth absurdity.

We mark, also, two other absurdities. The interpretations above given are *below* the force of the terms employed ; and they are *above* the character of reprobates.

They are *below* the force of the terms employed. To “*taste* the heavenly gift,” is not a mere intellectual or sentimental approval of it ; for this heavenly gift is distinguished both from the Holy Spirit, and from the word of God, mentioned afterwards ; which leaves us no choice but to interpret it of Christ : and then to taste of Christ, is to receive his *grace* and mercy ; “if so be ye have tasted that the Lord is *gracious*.” Thus the Greek fathers, and many later divines, understand it of the remission of sins ; which interpretation is greatly confirmed by Rom. v, where “the gift,” “the free gift,” and “the gift by grace,” are used both for the means of our justification, and for justification itself. To “taste the heavenly gift,” then, is, in this sense, so to taste that the Lord is gracious as to receive the remission of sins. To be made “partakers of the Holy Ghost,” follows this in the usual order of describing the work of God in the heart. It is the fruit of faith, the Spirit of adoption and sanctification—the Spirit in his comforting and renewing influences following our justification. To restrain this participation of the Holy Ghost to the endowment of miraculous powers, requires it to be previously established, either, 1. That *all* professing Christians, in that age, were thus endowed with miraculous powers, of which there is no proof ; or, 2. That only those who were thus endowed with miraculous gifts were capable of this aggravated apostasy ; and then the apostle’s warning would not be a general one, even to the Christians of the apostolic age, nor even to all the believing Hebrews, which it manifestly is. On the other hand, since all true believers in the sense of the apostle, received the Holy Ghost in his comforting and renovating influences, the meaning of the phrase becomes obvious, and it lays down the proper ground for a general admonition. Again ; “to taste the good word of God,” is still an advance in the process of a genuine experience. It is tasting the *good* word, that is, the goodness of the word in a course of experience and practice ; having personal proof of its goodness and adaptation to man’s state in the world : for to argue from the term “*taste*,” as



though something superficial and transitory only were meant, is as absurd as to argue from the threat of Christ that those who refused the invitation of his servants should not "*taste*" of his supper, that he only excluded them from a superficial and transient gustation of his salvation here and hereafter; or that, when the psalmist calls upon us to "*taste* and see that the Lord is good," he excludes a full, and rich, and permanent experience of the Divine goodness. Finally, if by the "powers of the world to come," it could be proved that the apostle meant the miraculous evidences of the truth of the Gospel, it would not follow, that he supposes the persons spoken of to be endowed with miraculous powers; but that to *taste* these powers, was rather to experience the abundant blessings of a religion thus confirmed and demonstrated by signs and wonders and divers miracles, according to what he urges in chap. ii, 4, of the same epistle. The phrase, however, is probably a still farther advance upon the former, and signifies a personal experience of the mighty energy and saving power of the Gospel. Thus the interpretation of the Calvinists has the absurdity of making the apostle speak little things in great words, and of using unmeaning tautologies. To "partake of the Holy Ghost" is, according to them, to have the gift of miracles, and to taste "the powers of the world to come" is to have the gift of miracles. To taste the "heavenly gift," is to have a superficial relish of Gospel doctrine, and "to taste the good word of God," is also to have a superficial relish of Gospel doctrine: but how, then, are we to take the term "taste," when the apostle speaks of *tasting* "the powers of the world to come?" According to these comments, this can only mean that they had a superficial *taste* of the power of working miracles!

But as these interpretations are *below* the force of the terms, so they are *above* the capacity of the reprobate. "They had, moreover," says Scott, "tasted of the good word of God, and their connexions, impressions, and transient afflictions made them sensible that it was a good word, and that it was for their good to attend to it; and their purposes of doing so had produced such hopes and joys, as have been described in the case of the stony ground hearers, Matt. xiii, 21, 22." That Mr. Scott had no right apprehension of the class of persons intended by those who received the good seed upon stony ground, might easily be proved; but this is beside our present purpose. We find in the words quoted above, (and we refer to Mr. Scott rather than to the older divines of the same school, because it is often said that Calvinism is now modified and improved,) "convictions," "impressions of the goodness of the word," and purposes of attending to it, ascribed to the non-elect; persons to



whose salvation this bar is placed, that, according to this commentator, and all others who adopt the same system, Christ never "intentionally" died for them. We ask, then, are these "convictions, impressions," and "purposes," from the grace of God working in man, or from the natural man wholly unassisted by the grace of God? If the latter, then what becomes of the doctrine of the entire corruption of human nature, which they profess to hold, and that so strenuously? "In me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing." By the flesh, the apostle means, doubtless, his natural and unassisted state. Yet how many "good things" are ascribed, by Mr. Scott, to the very reprobate? "Conviction of the truth of the Gospel" was doubtless "good," and showed, in that day especially, when the prejudices of education had not yet come in to the aid of truth, an honest spirit of inquiry, and a docile mind. "Impressions" are still better, as they argue affection to truth which the natural man, as such, hates; and these are improved into an acknowledgment "of the goodness of the word," though it is a reproving word, and a doctrine of holiness, and consequently of restraint. To this the merely "carnal mind," which St. Paul declares to be "enmity against God," is here allowed not only to assent, but also to perceive with some taste and approving relish. "Purposes of attending to this good word," are also admitted, which is a still farther advance, and must by all be acknowledged to be "good," as they are the very basis of real religious attainment. Yet if all these, which, in the judgment of every spiritual man would be considered as placing such persons in a very hopeful state, and would give joy to angels, unless they were admitted to the secret of reprobation, are to be ascribed to nature; then the carnal mind is not absolutely and in all cases "enmity against God;" in our "flesh some good thing may dwell;" and we are not by nature "dead in trespasses and sins."

Let us then suppose, since this position cannot be maintained in defiance of the Scriptures, that these are the effects of the grace of God, and the influences of the Holy Spirit in man; to what end is that grace exerted? Is it that it may lead to salvation? This is denied, and consistently so; for can such convictions, and desires, and purposes, lead to true repentance, when Christ gives true repentance to none but to the elect? Nor can they lead to pardon, because Christ has not intentionally "died for the persons in question." Is the end, then, as Poole, or rather his continuator states it, that the Holy Spirit may "try how far a natural man may be raised" without ceasing to be so? If that is affirmed, for whose sake is the experiment tried? Not surely for the sake of the Holy Spirit, whose omniscience needs no instruction by experiment: not for

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ours ; for this, instead of being edifying, only puzzles and confounds us, for who can tell how far this experiment may go, and how far it is making upon himself ? This, too, is so very unworthy an aspersion upon the Holy Spirit, that it ought to make sober men very much suspect the system which requires it. Is it then, finally, as some have affirmed, to make the persons more guilty, and to heighten their condemnation ? How few Calvinists, in the present day, are bold enough to affirm this, although the advocates of that system have formerly done it ; and yet this is the only *practical* end which their system will allow to be assigned to such an act as that which, by a strange abuse of terms, is called the operation of “common *grace*” in the hearts of the reprobate. In no other practical end can it issue, but to aggravate their guilt and damnation, as the old divines of this school perceived and acknowledged. Either, then, their interpretation of these passages affirms a change in the principles and feelings of the persons spoken of by the apostle in this epistle, much above the capacity and power of reprobates, greatly as it falls below the real import of the terms used ; or else those who advocate the doctrine of reprobation are bound to the revolting conclusion, that the Holy Spirit thus works in them only to promote and deepen their destruction.

To that class of texts, which make it the duty of men to believe the Gospel, and threaten them with punishment for not believing, and which we adduced to prove, by necessary implication, that Christ died for all men, it has been replied ; that it is the duty of all men to believe the Gospel, whether they are interested in the death of Christ or not ; and that they are guilty and deserving of punishment for not believing it. By this argument it is conceived, that all such passages are made consistent with the doctrine of the limited extent of the death of Christ.

On both sides, then, it is granted, that it is the bounden duty of all men who hear the Gospel to believe it, and that the violation of this duty induces condemnation ; but if Christ died not for all such persons, we think it is plain, that it cannot be their duty to believe the Gospel ; and if this can be established, then does the scriptural principle of the obligation of all men to believe, which is acknowledged on both sides, refute all limitation of the extent of Christ’s atonement.

To settle this point, it is necessary to determine what is meant by believing the Gospel. Some writers in this controversy seem to take it only in the sense of giving credit to the Gospel as a Divine Revelation ; and not for accepting and trusting in it in order to salvation. But we have, in the New Testament, no such division of

the obligation of believing into two distinct duties, one laid upon one class of persons, and the other upon another class. So far from this, the faith which the Gospel requires of *all*, is *trust* in the Gospel;—"repentance towards God, and faith (trust) in our Lord Jesus Christ." Will any say, that when all men are commanded "every where to repent," two kinds of repentance are intended, one ineffectual, the other effectual; one to death, the other to life? And if not, will he contend that God commands one kind of faith to some, a faith which cannot lead to salvation; another kind of faith, which does lead to salvation, to others? that he commands a dead faith to the reprobate, a living faith to the elect? For, according to the intention of the command, such must be the duty; and if it is the duty of the reprobate to believe with the mere faith of assent, which, as to them, is dead, then no more was ever required of them, in the intention of God, than this dead faith. But if men will affirm this, they must show us such a restricted and modified command from God; and they must point out, in the commands which we have to believe in Christ, such a distinction of the obligation of believing into a higher and lower duty. There is no such modified command, and there is no such distinction; but, on the contrary, the faith which is required of all is that, and not less than that, whereof cometh salvation; for with remission of sins and salvation it is constantly connected. "He that believeth shall be saved." "Whosoever believeth on him shall not perish." "That believing ye might have life through his name." "To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins." The faith, then, required of all, is true faith; true faith following true repentance, the trust of a true penitent in the sacrifice of Christ as offered for his sins, that he may be forgiven, and received into the family of God.

If this, then, be the faith which is required of all who hear the Gospel, it is not, and cannot be the duty, of those to believe the Gospel, in the scriptural sense of believing, for whom Christ died not. 1. Because it is impossible, and God cannot command a thing impossible, and then punish men for not doing it; for this contradicts all notions of justice and benevolence. Nor does it alter the case whether the impossibility arises from a positive necessitating decree, or from withholding the aid necessary to enable them to comply with the command; such persons as those for whom Christ died not, never had, and never can have, the power to exercise the saving faith which is enjoined upon them; and being impossible to them, it never could be the subject of express command and obligation as to them; which nevertheless it is. 2. Be-



cause, according to the Calvinistic opinion, it is not in the intention of God that they should believe and be saved : what, therefore, he never intended, he could not command ; and yet he has plainly commanded it. 3. Because what all are bound to believe or trust in, is true : but it is false, according to this system, that Christ died for the reprobate, and therefore they are not bound to believe, or trust in him, though they are both commanded to believe, and threatened with condemnation if they believe not.

Here, then, is the dilemma into which all must fall, who deny that the necessary inference from the universal obligation to believe in Christ, is, as we have stated it, that he died for all. If they deny the universality of the obligation to believe, they deny plain and express Scripture, which commands all men to believe ; if they affirm the obligation to believe to be universal, they hold that men are bound to do that which is impossible ; that the Lawgiver commands them to do what he never intended they should do ; and that they are bound to believe and trust in what is not true, namely, that Christ died for them, and thus to lean upon a broken reed, and to trust their salvation to a delusion.

This is a difficulty which the theologians of this school have felt. The synod of Dort says, (9) " It is the promise of the Gospel, that whosoever believes in Christ crucified should not perish, but have everlasting life ; which promise, together with the *injunction* of repentance and faith, ought promiscuously and without distinction, to be declared and published to all men and people to whom God in his good pleasure sends the Gospel." But as some of the later Calvinists found themselves perplexed with this statement, they began to differ from the synod ; and, allowing that Christ died for all whom he commands to believe in him, denied that God had commanded all men so to believe. (1) These divines chose to fall on the opposite horn of the dilemma, and thus expressly to deny the word of God. Others have endeavoured to escape the difficulty by making faith in Christ a command of the moral law, under which even reprobates, as they take it, unquestionably are, and argue, that as by the principle of moral law, all are bound to believe every thing which God hath revealed, so by that law all are bound to believe in Christ, and, failing of that, are by the moral law justly condemned. It were easy, in answer to this, to show, that no man in the state of a reprobate, as they represent it, is under law of any kind, except a law of necessity to do evil ; but waiving this, it were as easy to prove, that, because the moral law obliges us, "*in prin-*

(9) Act. Syn. Dord, part 1, cap. 2. art. 5. (1) Vide WOMACK'S *Arcana Dogmatum*. p. 67

*ciple*," to do all which God commands, the command to the Jews to circumcise their children was a command of the moral law, as that to believe in Christ is a command of the moral law, because, in principle, it obliges us to believe what God has revealed. But should it be admitted that all are bound, by the moral law, to believe all that God reveals, yet, according to them, it is not revealed that Christ died for all ; this we contend for, but they contend against : all are not, upon that very principle, therefore, bound to believe that Christ died for them. Farther, those who hold this notion, contend that the moral law commands us to do a thing impossible, and contrary to truth ; and thus they fall upon the other horn of the dilemma.

The last class of texts we have adduced in favour of general redemption consist of those which impute the blame and fault of their non-salvation to men themselves. If Christ died for all men, so as to make their salvation practicable, then the fault, according to the doctrine of Scripture, lies in themselves ; if he died not so for them that they may be saved, then the bar to their salvation lies out of themselves, and in the absence of any saving provision for them in the Gospel, which is contrary to the doctrine of Scripture.

We enter not now upon the questions of the invincibility of grace, and free and bound will. These will come under consideration in their place ; and we now confine ourselves to the argument, as it is grounded upon texts of this class, as given above. The common reply to our argument, grounded upon these texts, at least among the more moderate kind of Calvinists, is, that the fault is indeed in the will of man, and that if men willed to come to Christ, that they might have life, they would have life ; and thus, they would have it understood, that the argument is answered. This, however, we deny : they have neither refuted it, nor escaped its force ; and nothing which is thus apparently conceded weakens the force of the conclusion, that if the bar to men's salvation be wholly in themselves, it lies not in the want of a provision made for their salvation in the Gospel ; and therefore they are so interested in the death of Christ, that they may be saved by it.

For let us put the case as to the non-elect, who are indeed the persons in question. Either it is possible for them to will to come to Christ, and to believe in him ; or it is not. If the former, then they may come to Christ, and believe in him, without obtaining life and salvation ; for he can dispense these blessings only to those for whom he purchased them, which, it is contended, he did for the elect only. If the latter, then the bar to their salvation is not in themselves ; but in that which makes it impossible for them to will

to come to Christ, and to believe in him. If it be said, that though this is impossible to them, yet that still the bar is in themselves, because it is in the obstinacy and perverseness of their own wills, we ask, whether the natural will of the elect is so much better than that of the reprobate, that by virtue of that better natural will, they come to Christ, and believe in him? This they will deny, and ascribe their willing, and coming to Christ, and believing in him, to the influence only of Divine grace. It will follow then, from this, that the bar to this same kind of willing, and believing, on the part of the reprobate, lies not in themselves, where the Scriptures constantly place it, and so charge it upon men as their *fault*, and the *reason of their condemnation*; but in something without them, even in the determination and decree of God not to bestow upon them that influence of his grace, by which this good will, and this power to believe in Christ, are wrought in the elect: which is precisely what the synod of Dort has affirmed. "This was the most free counsel, gracious will, and intention of God the Father; that the lively and saving efficacy of the most precious death of his Son should manifest itself in all the elect, for the bestowing upon them ONLY, justifying faith; and bringing THEM infallibly by it unto eternal life." (2) This doctrine cannot, therefore, be true; for the Scriptures plainly place the bar to the salvation of them that are lost, in themselves, and charge the fault only on the wilful disobedience and unbelief of men; whilst this opinion places it in the refusal, on the part of God, to bestow that grace upon the non-elect, by which alone the evil of their natural will can be removed.

Nor is this in the least remedied by arguing, that as Christ is rejected freely and voluntarily by the natural will of man, the guilt is still chargeable upon himself. For, not here to anticipate what may be said on the freedom of the will, it is confessed by Calvinists that the will of the reprobate is not free to choose to come to Christ, and believe in him, since without grace, not even the elect can do this. But if it were free to choose Christ, and believe in him, the not doing it would not be chargeable upon them as a fault. For they do not reject Christ as a Saviour, since he is not offered to *them* as such; and they sin not, by not believing, that is, by not trusting in Christ for salvation. For as it is not the will of God that they should so believe, they violate no command given to *them* to believe, unless it be held that God commands them to do that which he wills they should not do; which is only absurdly to say that he wills, and he does not will the same thing. And seeing that his commands are the declarations of his will, if the command

(2) Cap. 2, Art. 8



reaches to them, it is a declaration that he wills that concerning them, which, on this system, he does not will ; and this contradiction all are bound to maintain, who charge the want of faith, as a fault upon those to whom the power of believing is not imparted.

But the argument from this class of texts is not exhausted. They not only place that bar and fault which prevents the salvation of men in themselves ; but they as expressly exclude God from all participation in it, contrary to the doctrine before us. “He willeth all men to be saved ;” he has “no pleasure in the death of him that dieth.” “He sent his Son not to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved ;” and he invites all, beseeches all, obtests all, and makes even his threatenings merciful, since he interposes them to prevent men from going on still in their trespasses, and involving themselves in final ruin.

Perhaps not many Calvinists in the present day are disposed to resort to the ancient subterfuge, of a secret and a revealed will of God ;(3) and yet it is difficult to conceive how they can avoid admitting this notion, without totally denying that which is so clearly written, that God “willeth all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth ;” and that he commands, by his apostle, that prayers should be made “for all men.” The universality of such declarations has already been established ; and no way is left for escaping the difficulty in this direction. The incompatibility of such declarations, with the limited extent of Christ’s death, is therefore obvious, unless the term “*will*” can be modified. But if God declares his will in absolute terms, whilst he has yet secret reserves of a contrary kind, (to say nothing of the injury done, by such a notion, to the character of the God of truth, whose words are without dross of falsehood, “as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times ;”) this is to will that all men may be saved *in word*, and yet not to will it *in fact*, which is in truth not to will it at all. No subtlety of distinction can reconcile this. Nor, according to this scheme of doctrine, can God in any way, will the salvation of the non-elect. It is only under one condition, that he wills the salvation of any man : namely, through the death of Christ. His justice required this atonement for sin ; and he could not will man to be saved to the dishonour of his justice. If then that atonement does not extend to all men, he cannot will the salvation of all men ; for such of them as are not interested in this atonement, could not be saved consistently with his righteous administration, and he could not, therefore, will it. If, then, he wills the non-elect to be saved,

(3) The scholastic terms are *voluntas signi*, and *voluntas bene placiti*, a signified or revealed will, and a will of pleasure or purpose



*in any sense*, he must will this independently of Christ's sacrifice for sins ; and if he cannot will this for the reason just given, he cannot "will all men to be saved," which is contrary to the texts quoted : he cannot, therefore, invite all to be saved ; he cannot beseech all by his ministers to be reconciled to him ; for these acts could only proceed from his willing them to be saved : and for the same reason, "all men" ought not to be prayed for by those who hold this doctrine, since they assume, that it is not the will of God that all men should be saved. Thus they repeal the apostle's precept, as well as the principle upon which it is built, by mere human authority ; or else they so interpret the principle, as to impeach the truth of God, and so practise the precept, as to indulge reserves in their own mind, similar to those they feign to be in the mind of God. Whilst, therefore, it remains on record, that "God willeth *all men* to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth ;" and that he "willeth not that *any* should perish, but that *all* should come to repentance," it must be concluded, that Christ died for all ; and that the reason of the destruction of any part of our race lies not in the want of a provision for their salvation ; not in any limitation of the purchase of Christ, and the administration of his grace ; but in their obstinate rejection of both.

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## CHAPTER XXVI.

### THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED.

So far, then, we have advanced in this discussion as to show, that whilst no passage of Scripture can be adduced, or is even pretended to exist, which declares that Christ did not die equally for all men, there are numerous passages which explicitly, and in terms which cannot, by any fair interpretation, be wrested from that meaning, declare the contrary ; and that there are others, as numerous, which contain the doctrine by necessary implication and inference. To implication and inference the Calvinist divines also resort, and the more so, as they have not a direct text in favour of their scheme. It is necessary, therefore, in order to obtain a comprehensive view of this controversy, compressed into as narrow limits as possible, to examine those parts of Scripture which, according to their inferential interpretations, limit not merely the actual, but the intentional efficacy of the death of Christ to the elect only.

The first are those passages which treat of persons, said to be elected, foreknown, and predestinated to the spiritual and celestial

blessings of the new dispensation ; and the argument from the texts in which these distinctions occur, is, that the persons so called, elected, foreknown, and predestinated, are, by that very distinction, marked out as the only persons to whom the death of Christ intentionally extends.

We reserve it to another place to state the *systematic* views which the followers of Calvin, in their different shades of opinion, take of the doctrines of election, &c, lest our more simple inquiry into the sense of Scripture should be disturbed by extraneous topics ; and we are now, therefore, merely called to consider, how far this argument, which is professedly drawn from Scripture and not from metaphysical principles, is supported or refuted, by an examination of those portions of Holy Writ on which it is usually built : and it will not prove a difficult task to show, that, when fairly interpreted, they contain nothing which obliges us to narrow our interpretation of those passages which extend the benefit of the death of Christ to all mankind ; and that, in some views, they strongly corroborate their most extended meaning. Of a divine election, or choosing and separation from others, we have three kinds mentioned in the Scriptures.

The **FIRST** is the election of individuals to perform some particular and special service. Cyrus was “elected” to rebuild the temple ; the twelve apostles were “chosen,” elected, to their office by Christ ; St. Paul was a “chosen,” or elected, “vessel,” to be the apostle of the Gentiles. This kind of election to special office and service has, however, manifestly no relation to the limitation of eternal salvation, either in respect of the persons themselves so chosen, or of others. With respect to themselves, it did not confer upon them an absolute security. One of the twelve *elected* apostles was Judas, who fell and was lost ; and St. Paul confesses his own personal liability to become “a castaway,” after all his zeal and abundant labours. With respect to others, the twelve apostles, and St. Paul afterwards, were “elected” to preach the Gospel in order to the salvation of all to whom they had access.

The **SECOND** kind of election which we find in Scripture, is the election of nations, or bodies of people, to eminent religious privileges, and in order to accomplish, by their superior illumination, the merciful purposes of God, in benefiting other nations or bodies of people. Thus the descendants of Abraham, the Jews, were *chosen* to receive special revelations of truth ; and to be “the people of God,” to be his visible church, and publicly to observe and uphold his worship. “The Lord thy God hath *chosen* thee to be a peculiar people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the

earth." "The Lord had a delight in thy fathers to love them, and he *chose* their seed after them, even you, above all people." It was especially on account of the application of the terms ELECT, CHOSEN, and PECULIAR, to the Jewish people, that they were so familiarly used by the apostles in their epistles addressed to the believing Jews and Gentiles, then constituting the church of Christ in various places. For Christians were the subjects, also, of this second kind of election; the election of bodies of men to be the visible people and church of God in the world, and to be endowed with peculiar privileges. Thus they became, though in a more special and exalted sense, the chosen people, the elect of God. We say in a more special sense, because as the entrance into the Jewish church was by natural birth, and the entrance into the Christian church, properly so called, is by faith and a spiritual birth, these terms, although many became Christians by mere profession, and enjoyed various privileges in consequence of their people or nation being chosen to receive the Gospel, have generally respect, in the New Testament, to bodies of true believers, or to the whole body of true believers as such. They are not, therefore, to be interpreted, according to the scheme of Dr. Taylor, of Norwich, by the constitution of the Jewish, but by the constitution of the Christian church.

To understand the nature of this "election," as applied sometimes to particular bodies of Christians, as when St. Peter says, "the church which is at Babylon, *elected together* with you," and sometimes to the whole body of believers every where; and also the reason of the frequent use of the term election, and of the occurrence of allusions to the fact, it is to be remembered, that a great religious revolution, so to speak, had occurred in the age of the apostles; with the full import of which we cannot, without calling in the aid of a little reflection, be adequately impressed. This was no other than the abrogation of the CHURCH STATE of the Jews, which had continued for so many ages. They had been the only visibly acknowledged people of God in all the nations of the earth; for whatever pious people might have existed in other nations, they were not, in the sight of men, and collectively, acknowledged as "the people of Jehovah." They had no written revelations, no appointed ministry, no forms of authorized initiation into his church and covenant, no appointed holy days, no sanctioned ritual. All these were peculiar to the Jews, who were, therefore, an elected and peculiar people. This distinguished honour they were about to lose. They might have retained it, had they, by believing the Gospel, admitted the believing Gentiles of all nations to share it with them; but the great reason of their peculiarity and election,

as a nation, was terminated by the coming of the Messiah, who was to be "a light to lighten the Gentiles," as well as "the glory of his people Israel." Their pride and consequent unbelief resented this, which will explain their enmity to the believing part of the Gentiles, who, when that which St. Paul calls "the fellowship of the mystery" was fully explained, chiefly by the glorious ministry of that apostle himself, were called into this church relation and state of visible acknowledgment as the people of God, which the Jews had formerly enjoyed, and that with even a higher degree of glory, in proportion to the superior spirituality of the new dispensation. It was this doctrine which excited that strong irritation in the minds of the unbelieving Jews, and in some partially Christianized ones, to which so many references are made in the New Testament. They were "provoked," were made "jealous;" and were often roused to the madness of persecuting opposition by it. There was then a NEW ELECTION of a NEW PEOPLE of God, to be composed of Jews, not by virtue of their NATURAL DESCENT, but of their faith in Christ, and of Gentiles of all nations, also believing, and put, as believers, on equal ground with the believing Jews; and there was also a REJECTION, a reprobation, if the term please any one better; but not an absolute one: for THE ELECTION was offered to the Jews first, in every place, by offering them the Gospel. Some embraced it, and submitted to be the elect people of God, on the new ground of faith, instead of the old one of natural descent; and therefore the apostle, Rom. xi, 7, calls the believing part of the Jews, "the election," in opposition to those who opposed this "election of grace," and still clung to their former and now repealed election as Jews and the descendants of Abraham;—"but *the election* hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded." The offer had been made to the whole nation; all might have joined the one body of believing Jews and believing Gentiles; but the major part of them refused: they would not "come in to the supper;" they made "light of it;" light of an election founded on faith, and which placed the relation of "the people of God" upon spiritual attainments, and offered to them only spiritual blessings. They were, therefore, deprived of election and church relationship of every kind:—their temple was burned; their political state abolished; their genealogies confounded; their worship annihilated; and all visible acknowledgment of them by God as a church withdrawn, and transferred to a church henceforward to be composed chiefly of Gentiles: and thus, says St. Paul, Rom. x, 19, "were fulfilled the words of Moses, I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are *no people*, and by a foolish (ignorant and idolatrous) people I will anger you."



It is easy now to see what is the import of the "calling" and "election" of the Christian church, as spoken of in the New Testament. It was not the calling and the electing of one nation in particular to succeed the Jews; but it was the calling and the electing of believers in all nations, wherever the Gospel should be preached, to be in reality what the Jews had been but typically, and, therefore, in an inferior degree, the visible church of God, "his people," under Christ "the Head;" with an authenticated revelation; with an appointed ministry, never to be lost; with authorized worship; with holy days and festivals; with instituted forms of initiation; and with special protection and favour.

This second kind of election being thus explained, we may inquire, whether any thing arises out of it, either as it respects the Jewish church, or the Christian church, which obliges us in any degree to limit the explicit declarations of Scripture, as to the universal extent of the intentional benefit of the atonement of Christ.

With respect to the ancient election of the Jews to be the peculiar people and visible church of God, we may observe,

1. That it did not argue such a limitation of the saving mercy of God to them, as that their election secured the salvation of every Jew individually. This will be acknowledged by all; for, as the foundation of their church state was their natural relation to Abraham, and our Lord, with allusion to this, says to Nicodemus, "that which is born of the flesh is flesh," none of them could be saved by virtue of being "Jews outwardly."

2. That it did not argue, that *sufficient*, though not equal means of salvation, were not left to the non-elected Gentile nations. These were still a "law unto themselves;" and "in every nation," says St. Peter, "he that feareth God, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him."

3. That, so far from the election of the Jewish nation arguing that the mercy of God was restrained from the Gentile nations, it is manifest that, great reason as the Almighty had to be provoked by their idolatries, the election of the Jews was intended for their benefit also; that it was not only designed to preserve truth, but to diffuse it, and to counteract the spread of superstition and idolatry. The miracles wrought from age to age among them, exalted "Jehovah" above the gods of the heathen; rays of light from their sacred books and institutions spread far beyond themselves; the temple of Solomon had its court of the Gentiles, and the "stranger" from "a far country" had access to it, and enjoyed his right of praying to the true God; their captivities and dispersions wondrously fulfilled the purposes of justice as to them, and of mercy as to the nations into

which they were carried ; and their whole history bore an illustrious part in that series of the Divine dispensations by which the Gentile world was prepared for the coming of Christ, and the establishment of his religion. This subject has already been adverted to and illustrated in the first part of this work. Jerusalem was, in an inferior sense, literally “the joy of the whole earth ;” and “in the seed of Abraham,” all the nations of the earth have, in all ages, in some degree, been blessed.

With respect to the “election” of the Christian church, we also observe,

1. That neither does its election suppose such a special grace of God, as secures infallibly the salvation of every one of its members ; that is, in other words, of every elected person. For to pass over the case of those who are Christians but in name, even true Christians are exhorted to give diligence to make their “calling and election sure ;” and are warned against “turning back to *perdition*.” We have also seen, in the case of the apostates mentioned in the Epistle to the Hebrews, that, in point of fact, some of those who had thus been actually elected, and brought into a state of salvation, had fallen away into a condition of extreme hazard, or of utter hopelessness.

2. That the election of Christians, as members of the church of Christ, concludes nothing against the saving mercy of God being still exercised as to those who are not of the church. Even the Calvinists cannot deny this ; for many who are not now of the body of the visible and true church of Christ, may, according to their scheme, be yet called and chosen into that body, and thus partake of an election which, whilst they are notoriously wicked and alien from the church of Christ, they do not actually partake of, whatever may be the secret purposes of God concerning them.

3. That Christians are thus elected, and made the church of God, not in consequence of others being excluded from the compassions and redeeming mercy of Christ ; but for their benefit and salvation, that they also may be called into the fellowship of the Gospel. “Ye are the light of the world ;” “ye are the salt of the earth.” But in what sense could the church be “the light of the world,” were there no capacity in the world to receive the same light with which it is itself enlightened ? or “the salt of the earth,” if it did not exist for the purifying of the mass beyond itself, with the same purity ? Yet if such a capacity exists in “the world,” it is from the grace of God alone that it derives it, and not from nature ; a grace which could be imparted to the world only in consequence of the death of Christ. Thus nothing is to be argued from the actual election of

the Christian church, as God's visible and acknowledged people on earth, in favour of the doctrine that election limits the benefits of our Lord's atonement; but, on the contrary, this election of the church has, for one of its final causes, the illumination of the world. But as Calvinistic commentators have so generally confounded this *collective* election with *personal* election, (a doctrine to which, in its proper place, we shall presently advert,) and have, in consequence, misunderstood and misinterpreted the argument of St. Paul, in the ix, x, and xi chapters of his Epistle to the Romans: this celebrated discourse of the apostle requires to be briefly examined.

Let the reader, then, take the epistle in his hand, and follow the argument in these chapters, with reference to the determining of the two main questions at issue, namely, whether personal or collective election be the subject of the apostle's discourse; and whether the election, of which he speaks, of whatever kind it may be, is, in the sense of the Calvinists, unconditional.

Let us examine the discourse, first, with reference to the question of personal or collective election.

It is acknowledged by all, that, whatever other subjects the apostle may or may not connect with it, he treats of the casting off of the Jews, as the visible church of God, and the calling of the Gentiles into that relation. For the case of the Jews he expresses great "sorrow of heart;" not indeed because God had now determined to compose his visible church upon a new principle, that of faith, and to constitute it no longer upon that of natural descent from Abraham; for to announce this doctrine St. Paul was chosen to be an apostle, and to call, by earnest and extensive labours, not only the Gentiles, but the Jews thankfully to submit to it, by receiving the Gospel: but he had great "sorrow of heart," both on account of their having rejected this gracious offer, and of the calamities which the approaching destruction of their nation would bring upon them, ver. 1, 2. The enumeration which he makes in verses 4 and 5, of the religious honours and privileges of the Jewish nation, whilst it remained a church accomplishing the purposes of God, shows that he did not intend, by proclaiming the new foundation on which God would now construct his church, and elect to himself a people out of all nations, to detract at all from the divinity or glory of the Mosaic dispensation.

The objection made, in the minds of the Jews, to this doctrine of the abolition of the Jewish visible church as founded upon descent from Abraham, in the line of Isaac, was, as we may collect from ver. 6, that it was contrary to the word and promise of God made to Abraham. This objection St. Paul first refutes:—"Not as



though the word of God hath taken none effect," literally "has fallen," or "fallen to the ground," that is, has not been accomplished; or as though this election of a new church, composed only of believing Jews and Gentiles, was contrary to the promises made to Abraham, Gen. xvii, 7, 8, "I will establish my covenant between me and thee, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee." This he proves, from several events, which the Jews could not deny, as being in the records of their own history. By these facts he shows, that the exclusion of a part of the seed of Abraham, at various times, from being the visible church of God, was not, as the Jews themselves must allow, any violation of the covenant with Abraham. He first instances the case of the descendants of Jacob himself, although he was the son of Isaac. "All are not Israel, (God's visible church and acknowledged people,) who are of Israel," or Jacob; for a great part of the ten tribes who had been carried into captivity before the Babylonian invasion of Judah, had never returned, had never been again collected into a people, and had, for ages, been cast out of their ancient church state and relation, though, by natural descent, they were "of Israel," that is, descendants of Jacob.

From Jacob he ascends to Abraham, ver. 7: "Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children," that is, Abraham's "seed" in the sense of the promise; "but in Isaac," not in Ishmael, "shall thy SEED be called;" "that is, they which are the children of the flesh," Ishmael by Hagar, and his descendants, "these are not the children of God. But the children of the promise," Isaac, born of Sarah, and his descendants, "are counted for the seed," meaning, obviously, for that seed to whom the promise refers. He gives a third instance of this election and exclusion taken from the children of Isaac, ver. 10-13, "And not only this; but when Rebecca, also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac; (for the children being not yet born, neither having done good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election," the election of one in preference to the other, "might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;) it was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated." On this last passage, so often perverted to serve the system of Calvinian election and reprobation, a few remarks more at large may be allowed.

1. The argument of the apostle, of which this instance is in continuance, requires us to understand that he is still speaking of "the seed" intended in the promise, which did not comprise all the descendants either of Abraham, or Isaac, or Jacob, for he brings



instances of exclusion from each ; but such as God elected to be his visible church : he is not therefore speaking of the personal election or rejection of Isaac, or Ishmael, or Jacob, or Esau ; but of their descendants in certain lines, as elected to be the acknowledged church of God.

2. This is proved, also, from those passages in the history of Moses, which furnish the facts on which the apostle reasons, and which he quotes briefly as being well known to the Jews. “As it is written, The elder shall serve the younger.” Now this is written, Gen. xxv, 23, “TWO NATIONS are in thy womb, and two manner of PEOPLE shall be separated from thy bowels ; and the one PEOPLE shall be stronger than the other PEOPLE ; and the elder,” the descendants of the elder, “shall serve the younger.” So far, indeed, was this prophecy from being intended of Esau personally, that he himself did never serve his brother Jacob, although he wantonly surrendered to him his birthright. Another passage is found in the prophet Malachi, i, 2, 3, and expresses God’s dealings, not with the individuals Jacob and Esau ; but with their descendants, who, according to frequent usage in Scripture, are called by the names of their first ancestors. “Was not Esau Jacob’s brother ? yet I loved Jacob, and I hated Esau, and laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness !” judgments which fell not upon Esau personally, but upon the Edomites his descendants.

3. If the apostle, in this instance of Jacob and Esau, speaks of the rejection or reprobation of *individuals*, he says nothing at all to his purpose, because he is discoursing of the rejection of the Jews, as A NATION, from being any longer the visible and acknowledged church of God in the world ; so that instances of individual reprobation would have been impertinent to his purpose. But to proceed with the apostle’s discourse.

Having shown, by these instances, that God had limited the covenant to a part of the descendants of Abraham, at different periods, he puts it to the objecting Jews to say, whether, on that account, there was a failure of his covenant with Abraham ; “What shall we say then, Is there unrighteousness with God ? God forbid.” The word unrighteousness is usually taken in the sense of injustice, but is sometimes used in the sense of falsehood and unfaithfulness, by the writers of the New Testament, as well as by the LXX ; and in this sense it well agrees with the apostle’s reasoning ; “Is there then unfaithfulness with God,” because he has so frequently limited the promise made to the seed of Abraham, to particular branches of that seed ? The apostle denies that in this there was any *unfaith-*

*fulness*, or, in the sense of injustice, which perhaps is to be preferred, any “*unrighteousness* in God;” and the Jews themselves were bound to agree with him, since, as the apostle adds, it was a general principle laid down in their own law, by the Lawgiver himself when speaking to Moses, and by which, therefore, all such promises of special favour must be interpreted,—“I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.” The connexion of these words, as they stand in Exodus xxxiii, 19, shows that the *mercy* and *grace* here spoken of, refer not, as Beza would have it, to that mercy exercised to individuals which supposes *misery*, and consists in the exercise of pardon; but to the granting of special favours and privileges. For the words are spoken to Moses, in answer to his prayer, “I beseech thee, show me thy glory.” To him God had before said, verse 17, “Thou hast found grace in my sight, and I know thee by thy name.” He was not, therefore, in the case of a guilty, miserable man. Nor do the words refer to the forgiveness of the people at his intercession. This had been done; the transaction, as to them, had been finished, as the history shows; and then Moses, encouraged by the success of his intercessions for them, makes a bold but wholly personal request for himself. “And he said, I beseech thee, show me thy glory. And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee; and will be gracious,” in showing these great condescensions, “to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy.” God has a right to select whom he pleases to enjoy special privileges; in this there is no “*unrighteousness*,” and, therefore, in limiting those favours to such branches of Abraham’s seed, as he chose to elect, neither his justice nor his truth was impeached. This is obvious, when the words are interpreted of the election of collective bodies of men, and of the individuals which compose them, to peculiar favours and religious privileges; whilst yet all others have still the means of salvation. The onus lies only upon them who interpret this part of Scripture of personal unconditional election and reprobation, to show how it can be a “*righteous*” proceeding to punish men for not availing themselves of means of salvation which are never afforded them. This is manifestly “*unrighteous*;” but in the election and rejection spoken of by the apostle, he expressly denies that there is “*unrighteousness* with God;” he does this in a solemn manner, “God forbid:” and, therefore, the kind of election and rejection, of which he speaks, is not the unconditional election and reprobation of individuals to or from eternal salvation.

The conclusion of the apostle's answer to the objection of the Jews, that the casting off a part of the Jewish nation, even all who did not believe in Christ, was contrary to the promises made to Abraham, is, "So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy." He grants special favours, as the term "showing mercy," in the preceding verse, has been already proved to mean ; and in granting these special favours he often acts contrary to the designs and efforts of men, and frustrates both. The allusion contained in these words, to the case of Isaac and Esau, is, therefore, highly beautiful and appropriate—"it is not of him that *willeth*, nor of him that *runneth*." Isaac *willed* that Esau, the first-born, should have the blessing ; and Esau *ran* for the venison as the means of obtaining it ; but still Jacob obtained it. The blessing was not, however, a personal one, but referred to the *people* of whom Jacob was to be the progenitor, as the history given by Moses will show. Thus this case also affords no example of personal election.

The apostle having proved that there was neither unfaithfulness nor unrighteousness in God, in selecting from his own good pleasure, from his *sovereignty* if the term please better, the persons to be endowed with special religious honours and privileges, proceeds to show, with reference not only to the exclusion of the Jews, as a nation, from the visible church, but also to the terrible judgments which our Lord himself had predicted, and which were about to come upon them, that he exercises also the prerogative of making some notorious sinners, and especially when they set themselves to oppose his purposes, the eminent and unequivocal objects of his displeasure. Here again he uses for illustration an example taken from the Jewish Scriptures. But let the example be marked. Had it been his intention to show, that the personal election of Isaac and Jacob necessarily implied the personal reprobation of Ishmael and Esau ; and that their not receiving special privileges necessarily cut them off from salvation, so that being left to themselves they became objects of wrath, then would he have selected them as his illustrative examples, for this would have been required by his argument. But he selects Pharaoh, not a descendant of Abraham ; a person not involved in the cases of non-election which had taken place in Abraham's family ; but a notoriously wicked prince, and one who resolved to oppose himself to the designs of God in the deliverance of Israel from bondage. His doctrine, then, manifestly is, that when these two characters meet in individuals, or in nations, notorious vice and flagrant opposition to God's plans and purposes, he often makes them the objects of his special displeasure ; giving them up



to the hardness of their hearts, and postponing their destruction to make it more impressively manifest to the world. In every respect Pharaoh was a most appropriate example to illustrate the case of the body of the unbelieving Jews, who, when the apostle wrote, were under the sentence of a terrible excision. Pharaoh had several times hardened his own heart; now God hardens it, that is, in Scripture language, withdraws his all gracious interposition, and gives him up. So the Jews had hardened their hearts against repeated calls of Christ and his apostles; now God was about to give them up, as a nation, to destruction. Pharaoh was not suddenly cut off, but was spared; “for this same purpose have I raised thee up” from the effect of so many plagues; that is, I have not destroyed thee outright. The LXX translate, “thou hast been preserved;” for the Hebrew word rendered by us, “raised up,” never signifies to bring a person or thing into being, but to preserve, support, establish, or make to stand. Thus, also, the Jews had not been instantly cut off; but had been “endured with much long suffering,” to give them an opportunity of repentance, of which many availed themselves; and the remainder were still endured, though they were filling up the measure of their iniquities, and would, in the end, but by their own fault, display more eminently the justice and severity of God. Pharaoh’s crowning offence was his rebellious opposition to the designs of God in taking Israel out of Egypt, and establishing them in Canaan as an independent nation, and as the church of God; the Jews filled up the measure of their iniquities by endeavouring to withstand the purpose of God as to the Gentiles; his purpose to elect a church, composed of both Jews and Gentiles, only on the ground of faith, and this made the cases parallel. Therefore, says the apostle, it follows from all these examples, that “he hath mercy on whom he will have mercy,” gives special religious advantages to those whom he wills to elect for this purpose; “and whom he will,” whom he chooses to select as examples from among notorious sinners who rebelliously oppose his designs, “he hardeneth,” or gives up to a hardness which they themselves have cherished. In verse 19, the Jew is again introduced as an objector. “Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? for who hath resisted his will?” And to this St. Paul answers, “Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?” verse 20. The usual way in which the objection is explained, by non-Calvinistic commentators, is;—if the continuance of the Jews in a state of disobedience was the consequence of the determination of God to leave them to themselves.



why should God still find fault? If they had become obdurate by the judicial withholding of his grace, why should the Jews still be blamed, since his will had not been resisted, but accomplished? If this be the sense of the objection, then the import of the apostle's answer will be, that it is both perverse and wicked for a nation justly given up to obduraey, "to reply against God," or "debate" the case with him; and that it ought, silently at least to submit to its penal dereliction, recollecting that God has an absolute power over nations, not only to raise them to peculiar honours and privileges, and to take them away, as "the potter has power over the clay to make one vessel to honour, and another to dishonour;" but to leave them to fill up the measure of their sins, that his judgments may be the more conspicuous. That this is a better and more consistent sense than that forced upon these words by Calvinistic commentators, may be freely admitted; but it is not wholly satisfactory.

For, 1. One sees not what can be expected from a people judicially given up, but a "replying against God;" or what end is to be answered by taking any pains to teach a people, in this hopeless case, not "to reply against God," but to suffer his judgments in silence.

2. As little discoverable, if this be the meaning, is the appropriateness of the apostle's allusion to the parable of the potter, in Jeremiah, chap. xviii. There Almighty God declares his absolute power over nations to give them what form and condition he pleases; but still under these rules, that he repents of the evil which he threatens against wicked nations, when they repent, and withdraws his blessings from them when they are abused. But this illustration is surely not appropriate to the case of a nation given up to final obduraey, because the parable of the potter supposes the time of trial, as to such nations, not yet passed. "O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the Lord. Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel. At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it: if that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them. And at what instant I shall speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it; if it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good, wherewith I said I would benefit them." There is here no allusion to nations being kept in a state of judicial dereliction and obduraey, *in order* to make their punishment more conspicuous.

3. When the apostle speaks of the potter making of the "same lump, one vessel to honour and another to *dishonour*," the last term

does not fully apply to the state of a people devoted to inevitable destruction. It is true, that in a following verse he speaks of "*vessels of wrath fitted to destruction*;" but that is in another view of the case of the Jews, as we shall immediately show; nor does he affirm that they were "*fitted to destruction*" by God. There he speaks of what men fit themselves for; or that fitness for the infliction of the Divine wrath upon them, which they themselves, by their perverseness, create. Here he speaks of an *act of God*, using the figure of a potter forming some vessels "*to honour, others to dishonour*." But dishonour is not destruction. No potter makes vessels to destroy them; and we may be certain, that when Jeremiah went down to the potter's house, to see him work the clay upon "*the wheel*," that the potter was not employed in forming vessels to destroy them. On the contrary, says the prophet, when the lump of clay was "*marred in his hand*;" so that not for want of skill in himself, but of proper quality in the clay, it took not the form he designed, of the same lump he made "*another vessel, as it seemed good to the potter to make it*;"—a meaner vessel, as the inferior quality or temper of the clay admitted, instead of that finer and more ornamental form which it would not take. The application of this was natural and easy to the house of Israel. It had become a lump of *marred clay* in the hands of the potter, which answered not to his design, and yielded not to his will. This illustrated the case of the Jews, previous to the captivity of Babylon: they were marred in his hand, they were not answering the design for which he made them a people; but then the potter gave the stubborn clay another, though a baser form, and did not cast it away from him: he put the Jews into the condition of slaves and captives in a strange land, and reduced them from their honourable rank among the nations. This might have been averted by their repentance; but when the clay became utterly "*marred*," it was turned into this inferior, and less honourable form and state. But all this was not excision; not destruction. The proceeding was corrective, as well as punitive; it brought them to repentance in Babylon; and God "*repented him of the evil*." The potter took even that vessel which had been made unto dishonour for seventy years, and made of it again "*a vessel unto honour*," by restoring the polity and church relation of the Jews.

4. The interpretation to which these objections are made, also supposes that the body of the Jewish nation, had arrived at a state of dereliction already. But this epistle was written several years before the destruction of Jerusalem; and although the threatening had gone forth, as to the dereliction and "*hardening*" of the per-

severingly impenitent, it is plain, from the labours of the apostle himself to convert the Jews every where, and from his "*prayers*, that Israel might be saved," chap. x, 1; that he did not consider them, as yet at least, in this condition; though most of them, and especially those in Judea, were hastening to it.

Let us then take a view of this part of the apostle's discourse, in some respects different. The objecting Jew, upon the apostle having stated that God shows mercy, or special favour to whom he will, and selects out of the mass of sinners whom he pleases, for marked and eminent punishment, says, "Why doth he yet find fault?" "Why does he, by you, his messenger, allowing you your apostolic commission, continue to reprove and blame the Jews? for who hath resisted his will?" According to your own doctrine, he chooses the Gentiles, and rejects us; his will is accomplished, not resisted: "why then doth he still find fault?" We may grant that the objection of the Jew goes upon the Calvinistic view of sovereignty and predestination, and the shutting out of all conditions; but then it is to be remembered, that it is the objection of a perverse and unbelieving Jew; and that it is refuted, not conceded, by the apostle; for he proceeds wholly to cut off all ground and pretence of "replying against God," by his reference to the parable of the potter in Jeremiah. This reference, according to the view we have already given of that parable, shows, 1. That "the vessel" was not made "unto dishonour," until the clay of which it was formed, had been "marred in the hand of the potter;" that is, not until trial being made, it did not conform to his design; did not work according to the pattern in his mind. This is immediately explained by the prophet; the nation did not "repent," and "turn from its wickedness," and therefore God dealt with them "as seemed good" to him. Thus, in the time of the apostle, the Jewish nation was the clay marred in the hands of God. From its stubbornness and want of temper, it had not conformed to his *design* of bringing it to the honourable form of a Christian church, in association with the Gentiles. It was therefore made "a vessel unto dishonour," unchurched, and disowned of God, as its forefathers had been in Babylon. This was the dishonoured, degraded condition, of all the unbelieving Jews in the apostle's day, although the destruction of their city, and temple, and polity, had not taken place. They were rejected from being the visible church of God from the rending of the veil of the temple, or at least, from the day of Pentecost, when God visibly took possession of his new spiritual church, by the descent of the Holy Ghost. But all this was their own "*fault*;" and therefore, notwithstanding the objection of the perverse Jew,



“fault” might be found with them who refused the glory of a higher church estate than that which their circumcision formerly gave ; and which had been so long and so affectionately offered to them : with men who, not only would not enter “the kingdom of God” themselves, but attempted to hinder even the Gentiles from entering in, as far as lay in their power.

2. The reference to the parable of the potter served to silence their “replying against God” also ; because, in the interpretation which Jeremiah gives of that parable, he represents even the vessel formed unto dishonour, out of the mass which was “marred in the hand of the potter,” as still within the reach of the Divine favour, upon repentance ; and so the conduct of God to the Jews, instead of proceeding as the Jew in his objection supposes, upon rigid predestinarian and unconditional grounds, left their state still in their own hands : they had no need to remain vessels of dishonour, since the Christian church was still open to them, with its higher than Jewish honours. The word of the Lord, by his prophet, immediately on his having visited the potter’s house, declares that if a nation “repent,” he will repent of the evil designed against, or brought upon it. The Jews in Babylon, although they were there in the form of *dishonoured vessels*, did repent ; and of that dishonoured mass “vessels of honour” were again made, at their restoration to their own land. Instead of replying against God, they bowed to his judgments in silence ; and, as we read in the prayer of Daniel, confessed them just. Every Jew had this option when the apostle wrote, and has it now ; and therefore St. Paul does not here call upon the Jews, as persons hardened and derelict of God, to be silent, and own the justice of God ; but as persons whose silent submission would be the first step to their recovery. Nor will they always, even as a people, remain vessels of dishonour ; but be formed again on the potter’s wheel as vessels of honour and glory, of which the return from Babylon was probably a type. The object of the apostle was, therefore, to silence a rebellious and perverse replying against God, by producing a conviction, both of his sovereign right to dispense his favours as he pleases, and of his justice in inflicting punishments upon those who set themselves against his designs ; and thus to bring the Jews to repentance.

3. What follows verse 22 serves farther, and by another view, to silence the objecting Jew. It was true, that the body of the Jewish people in Judea, and their polity, would be destroyed : our Lord had predicted it ; and the apostles frequently, but tenderly, advert to it. This prediction did not, however, prove that the Jews were, at the time the apostle wrote, generally, in a state of entire and



hopeless dereliction; or the apostle would not so earnestly have sought, and so fervently have prayed for their salvation. Nor did that event itself prove, that those who still remained, and to this day remain, were given up entirely by God; for if so, why should the church have been, in all ages, taught to look for their restoration: no time being fixed, and no signs established, to enable us to conclude that the dereliction had been taken off? The temporal punishment of the Jews of Judea had no connexion with the question of their salvability as a people. To this sad national event, however, the apostle adverts, in the next verses. "What," or *besides*, "if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long suffering, the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: and that he might make known the riches of his glory, on the vessels of mercy, which he had before prepared to glory, even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles. As he saith also in Ossee, I will call them my people, who were not my people," &c, ver. 22-25. The apostle does not state his conclusion, but leaves it to be understood. He intended it manifestly, farther to silence the perverse objections of the Jews; and he gives it as a proof, not of sovereignty alone, but of sovereignty and justice; sovereign mercy to the Gentiles; but justice to the Jews: as though he had said, this procedure is also righteous, and leaves no room to reply against God.

The metaphor of "vessels" is still carried on; but by "vessels of dishonour, formed by the potter," and "vessels of wrath, fitted for destruction," he does not mean vessels in the same condition; but in different conditions. This is plain, from the difference of expression adopted: "vessels unto *dishonour*," and "vessels of *wrath*;" but as the apostle's reasoning is evidently influenced by the reference he has made to the parables of the potter, in the eighteenth and nineteenth chapters of Jeremiah, we must again refer to that prophecy for illustration. In all the examples which, in this discourse, St. Paul takes out of the Old Testament, it has been justly observed by critics, that he quotes briefly, and only so as to give to the Jews, who were well acquainted with their Scriptures, the key to the whole context in which the passages stand to which he directs their attention. So in the verses before us, by referring to the potter forming the vessels on the wheel, he directs them to the whole section of prophecy, of which that is the introduction. By examining this it will be found, that the prophet, in delivering his message, makes use of the work of the potter for illustration, in two states, and for two purposes. The first we have explained:—the giving to the mass, marred in the hands of the

potter, another form; which expressed that dishonoured, and humbled state, in which the Jews, both *for punishment and correction*, were placed under captivity in Babylon. But connected with the humbling of this proud people, by rejecting them for seventy years, as God's visible church, was also the terrible destruction of Jerusalem, and the temple itself. With reference to this, the prophet, in the nineteenth chapter, which is a continuation of the eighteenth, receives this command, "Thus saith the Lord, Go and get a *potter's earthen bottle*, and take of the ancients of the people, and the ancients of the priests; and go forth unto the valley of the sons of Hinnom, which is by the entry of the east gate, and proclaim there the words that I shall tell thee, and say, Hear ye the word of the Lord, O kings of Judah, and inhabitants of Jerusalem; Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel; behold, I will bring evil upon *this place*, the which whosoever heareth, his ears shall tingle." And then having delivered his awful message in various forms of malediction, he is thus commanded, in verse 10, "Then shalt thou break the bottle in the sight of the men that go with thee, and shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord of Hosts; even so will I *break* this people and this city, *as one breaketh a potter's vessel*, that cannot be made whole again." As this stands in the same section of prophecy as the parable of the forming of vessels out of clay by the potter, can it be doubted to what the apostle refers when he speaks, not only of "vessels made unto dishonour," but also of *vessels of wrath* fitted for destruction?" The potter's earthen bottle, broken by Jeremiah, was "a vessel of wrath fitted for destruction," though not in the intention of the potter who formed it; and the breaking or destruction of it, represented, as the prophet himself says, the destruction of the city, temple, and polity of the Jews, by the invasion of the forces of the king of Babylon. The coming destruction of the temple, city, and polity of the Jews by the Romans was thereby fitly represented by the same figure in *words*, that is, the destruction of an earthen vessel by violent fracture, as the former calamity had been represented by it in *action*. Farther, the circumstances of these two great national punishments signally answer to each other. In the former, the Jews ceased to be the visible church of God for seventy years; in the latter, they have been also unchurched for many ages. Their temporary rejection as the visible church of God when they were taken into captivity by Nebuchadnezzar, was marked, also, by circumstances of severe and terrible vengeance, by invasion, and the destruction of their political state. Their longer rejection, as God's church, was also accompanied by judgments of the same kind, and by their

more terrible excision and dispersion, as a body politic. As the prophet refers to both circumstances, so, in his usual manner of teaching by action, he illustrates both by symbols. The first, by the work of the potter on the wheels; the second, by taking "an earthen bottle, a vessel out of the house of the potter, and destroying it before the eyes of the ancients of the people and the ancients of the priests." The apostle, in like manner, refers to both events, and makes use of the same symbols verbally. The "dishonoured" state of the Jews, as no longer acknowledged by God as his people, since they would not enter the new church, the New Jerusalem, *by faith*, is shown by the vessel formed by the potter unto "dishonour;" the collateral calamities brought upon their city, temple, and nation, arising out of their enormous sins, is shown by allusion to the prophet's breaking another vessel, an earthen bottle. This temporal destruction of the Jews by the Roman invasion, was also figurative of the future and final punishment of all persevering unbelievers. As to the Jews of that day living in Judea, the *nation* of the Jews, the punishment figured by the broken vessel, was final, for they were destroyed by the sword, and wasted by slavery; and as to all who persevered in unbelief, the future punishment in eternity would be final and hopeless, "as one breaketh a potter's vessel that cannot be *made whole again*:" a sufficient proof that St. Paul is not speaking of the vessel in its state of *clay*, on the potter's wheel, which might be made whole again; and, therefore, the punishment figured by that was not final, but corrective; for the Jews, though made vessels unto dishonour in Babylon, were again made vessels of honour on their restoration; and the Jews now, though for a much longer period existing as "vessels of dishonour," shall be finally restored, brought into the church of Christ, acknowledged to be his people, as the believing Gentiles are, and thus, united with them, again be made "vessels unto honour."

The application of the apostle's words, in the verses just commented upon, as intended to silence the "replying" of the Jews against God, is now obvious. They could urge no charge upon God for making them vessels of dishonour by taking away their church state, for that was their own fault; they were "marred in his hands," and they yielded not to his design. But their case was no more hopeless than that of the Jews in Babylon; they might still be again made vessels of honour. And then, as to the case of the "vessels of wrath fitted for destruction," those stubborn Jews, who were bringing upon themselves the Roman invasion, with the destruction of their city and nation; and all perverse, unbelieving Jews, who continued, in other parts of the world, to reject the Gos-



pel; although their approaching punishment would be final and remediless, yet was there no ground for them "to reply against God" on that account, as though this dispensation of wrath were the result of unconditional predestination and rigid sovereignty. On the contrary, it was an act of pure and unquestionable justice, which the apostle proves by its being brought upon themselves by their own sins; and by the circumstance that it did not take place until after God had "endured them with much long suffering."

1. The destruction was brought upon themselves by their own sins. This is manifest from all the instances in the New Testament, in which their sins are charged upon them as the cause of their calamities, and which need not be quoted; and also from the expression in the text before us, vessels "*fitted* to destruction." The word might as well have been rendered "*adapted* to destruction," which fitness or congruity for punishment can be produced only by sin; and this sin must have been their own choice and fault, unless we should blasphemously make God the author of sin, which but a few Calvinistic divines have been bold enough to affirm. Nor are we to overlook the change of speech which the apostle uses(4) when speaking of "the vessels of mercy." Their "preparation unto glory" is ascribed expressly to God,—"*which HE had afore prepared unto glory;*" but of the vessels of wrath the apostle simply says passively, "*fitted to destruction,*" leaving the agent to be inferred from the nature of the thing, and from the testimony of Scripture, which uniformly ascribes the sins of men to themselves, and their punishment to their sins.

2. The justice of God's proceeding as to the incorrigible Jews is still more strongly marked by the declaration, that these vessels of wrath fitted, or adapted, to destruction, were "*endured with much long suffering.*" To say that their punishment was delayed to render it more conspicuous, after they had been left or given up by God, would be no impeachment of God's justice; but it is much more consonant to the tenor of Scripture to consider the "*long suffering*" here mentioned, as exercised previously to their being given up to the hardness of their hearts, like Pharaoh, and even after they were, in a rigid construction of just severity, "*fitted for destruction:*" the punishment being delayed to afford them still farther opportunities for repentance. The barren tree, in our Lord's parable, was the emblem of the Jewish nation, and no one can deny that after the Lord had come for many years "*seeking fruit and finding none,*" this fruitless tree was "*fitted*" to be cut down; and yet it was "*endured with much long suffering.*" This

(4) WOLFIUS, in loc.



view is, also, farther supported by the import of the word "long suffering," and its use in the New Testament. Long suffering is a mode of *mercy*, and the reason of its exercise is only to be found in a merciful *intention*. Hence "goodness, and forbearance, and long suffering," are united by the apostle, in another part of this epistle, when speaking of these very Jews, in a passage which may be considered as strictly parallel with that before us. "Or despisest thou the riches of his *goodness*, and *forbearance*, and *long suffering*; not knowing that the *goodness* of God *leadeth thee to repentance*? But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God;" which "wrath" the long suffering of God was exercised to prevent, by leading them "to repentance," Rom. ii, 4, 5. So also St. Peter teaches us, that the end of God's long suffering to men is a merciful one: he is "long suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to *repentance*." The passage in question, therefore, cannot be understood of persons derelict and forsaken of God, as though the long suffering of God, in enduring them, were a part of the process of "showing his wrath and making his power known." Doddridge, a moderate Calvinist, paraphrases it: "What if God, resolving" at last "to manifest his wrath, and make his power known, hath," *in the meantime*, "endured with much long suffering" *those who shall finally appear to be* "the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction?" to which there is no objection, provided it be allowed that in this "*meantime*" they might have repented and obtained mercy.

Thus the proceedings of God as to the Jews shut out all "reply" and "debate" with God. Nothing was unjust in his conduct to the impenitent among them, for they were "vessels of wrath fitted for destruction," wicked men justly liable to it, and yet, before God proceeded to his work of judgment, he endured them with forbearance, and gave them many opportunities of coming into his church on the new election of believers both of Jews and Gentiles. And as to this election the whole was a question not of justice but of grace, and God had the unquestionable right of forming a new believing people, "not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles," and of filling them, as "vessels of honour," with those riches, that fulness of glory, as his now acknowledged church, for which he had "afore prepared them" by faith, the only ground of their admission into his covenant. The remainder of the chapter, on which we have commented, contains citations from the prophecies, with respect to the salvation of the "remnant," of the believing Jews, and the calling of the Gentiles. The tenth and eleventh chapters, which

continue the discourse, need no particular examination ; but will be found to contain nothing but what most obviously refers to the collective rejection of the Jewish nation, and the collective election of the “remnant” of believing Jews, along with all believing Gentiles, into the visible church of God.

We have now considered this discourse of the apostle Paul, with reference to the question of personal or collective election, and find that it can be interpreted only of the latter. Let us consider it, secondly, with reference to the question of *unconditional* election, a doctrine which we shall certainly find in it ; but in a sense very different from that in which it is held by Calvinists.

By unconditional election, divines of this class understand an election of persons to eternal life without respect to their faith or obedience, these qualities in them being supposed necessarily to follow as consequences of their election ; by unconditional reprobation, the counterpart of the former doctrine, is meant a non-election or rejection of certain persons from eternal salvation ; unbelief and disobedience following this rejection as necessary consequences. Such kind of election and rejection has no place in this chapter, although the subject of it is the election and rejection of bodies of men, which is a case more unfettered with conditions than any other. We have, indeed, in it several instances of unconditional election. Such was that of the descendants of Isaac to be God’s visible church, in preference to those of Ishmael ; such was that of Jacob, to the exclusion of Esau ; which election was declared when the children were yet in the womb, before they had done “good or evil ;” so that the blessing of the special covenant did not descend upon the posterity of Jacob, because of any righteousness in Jacob, nor was it taken away from the descendants of Esau, because of any wickedness in their progenitor. In like manner, when Almighty God determined no longer to found his visible church upon natural descent from Abraham in the line of Isaac and Jacob, nor in any line according to the flesh ; but to make faith in his Son Jesus Christ the gate of admission into this privilege, he acted according to the same sovereign pleasure. It is not impossible to conceive that he might have carried on his saving purposes among the Gentiles through Christ, without setting up a visible church among them ; as, before the coming of Christ he carried on such purposes in the Gentile nations, (unless we suppose that all but the Jews perished,) without collecting them into a body, and making himself their head as his church, and calling himself “their God” by special covenant, and by visible and constant signs acknowledging them to be “his people.” Greatly inferior would

have been the mercy to the Gentile world had this plan been adopted; and, as far as it appears to us, the system of Christianity would have been much less efficient. We are, indeed, bound to believe this, since Divine wisdom and goodness have determined on another mode of procedure; but still it is conceivable. On the contrary, the purpose of God was now not only to continue a visible church in the world, but to extend it in its visible, collective, and organized form, into all nations. Yet this resolve rested on no goodness in those who were to be subjects of it: both Jews and Gentiles were "concluded under sin," and "the whole world was guilty before God." As this plan is carried into effect by extending itself into different nations, we see the same sovereign pleasure. A man of Macedonia appears to Paul in a vision by night, and cries, "Come over and help us;" but we have no reason to believe that the Macedonians were better than other Gentiles, although they were *elected* to the enjoyment of the privileges and advantages of evangelical ordinances. So in modern times parts of Hindostan have been *elected* to receive the Gospel, and yet its inhabitants presented nothing more worthy of this election than the people of Tibet, or California, who have not yet been elected. We call this sovereignty; not indeed in the sense of many Calvinistic writers, who appear to understand by the sovereign acts of God those procedures which he adopts only to show that he has the power to execute them; but because the reasons of them, whether they are reasons of judgment, or wisdom, or mercy, are hidden from us—either that we have no immediate interest in them, or that they are too deep and ample for our comprehension, or because it is an important lesson for men to be taught to bow with reverent submission to his regal prerogatives. This is the unconditional election and non-election taught by the apostle in this chapter; but what we deny is, that either the spiritual blessings connected with religious privileges follow as necessary consequences from this election; or that unbelief, disobedience, and eternal ruin follow in the same manner from non-election. Of both these opinions the apostle's discourse itself furnishes abundant refutation.

Let us take the instances of election. The descendants of Abraham in the line of Isaac and Jacob were elected; but true faith, and obedience, and salvation, did not follow as infallible consequents of that election. On the contrary, the "Jew outwardly," and the "Jew inwardly," were always distinguished in the sight of God; and the children of Abraham's faith, not the children of Abraham's body, were the true "Israel of God." Again, the Gentiles were at length elected to be the visible church of God; but obedience



and salvation did not follow as necessary consequents of this election. On the contrary, many Gentiles chosen to special religious privileges have, in all ages, neglected the great salvation, and have perished, though professing the name of Christ; and in that pure age in which St. Paul wrote, when comparatively few Gentiles entered the church but with a sincere faith in Christ, he warns all of the danger of excision for unbelief and disobedience:—"Thou standest by faith; be not high minded, but fear." "For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee."—"Toward thee goodness, if thou continue in his goodness; otherwise thou also shalt be cut off." Certain, therefore, it is, that although this collective election of bodies of men to religious privileges, and to become the visible church of God, be unconditional, the salvation to which these privileges were designed to lead, depends upon personal faith and obedience.

Let us turn, then, to the instances of non-election or rejection; and here it will be found that unbelief, disobedience, and punishment, do not follow as infallible consequents of this dispensation. Abraham was greatly interested for Ishmael, and obtained, in answer to his prayer, at least temporal promises in his behalf, and in that of his posterity; and there is no reason to conclude from any thing which occurs in the sacred writers, that his Arabian descendants were shut out, except by their own choice and fault, at any time, from the hopes of salvation; at least previous to their embracing the imposture of Mohammed: for if so, we must give up Job and his friends as reprobates. The knowledge of the true God existed long in Arabia; and "Arabians" were among the fruits of primitive Christianity, as we learn from the Acts of the Apostles.

Nor have we any ground to conclude that the Edomites, as such, were excluded from the mercies of God, because of their non-election as his visible church. Their proximity to the Jewish nation must have served to preserve among them a considerable degree of religious knowledge; and their continuance as a people for many ages, may argue at least no great enormity of wickedness among them: which is confirmed by the reasons given for their ultimate destruction. The final malediction against this people is uttered by the prophet Malachi. "Whereas Edom saith, We are impoverished, but we will return and build the desolate places; thus saith the Lord of Hosts, They shall build, but I will throw down; and they shall call them, the BORDER OF WICKEDNESS, and, the people against whom the Lord hath indignation for ever," i. 4. Thus their destruction was the result of their "wickedness" in the later periods of their history; nor have we any reason to conclude that this was



more inevitable than that of other ancient nations, whom God, as in the case of Assyria, called to repentance ; but who, not regarding the call, were finally destroyed. That the Edomites were not, in more ancient times, the objects of the Divine displeasure, is manifest from Deut. ii, 5, where it is recorded that God commanded the Israelites, “Meddle not with them ; for I will not give you of their land, no, not so much as a foot breadth ; because I have given Mount Seir unto Esau for a possession.” They also outlived, as a people, the ten tribes of Israel ; they continued to exist when the two tribes were carried into captivity to Babylon ; and about the year of the world 3875, or 129 before the Christian era, John Hircanus entirely subdued them, and obliged them to incorporate with the Jewish nation and to receive religion. They professed consequently the same faith, and were thus connected with the visible church of God. (5)

We come, finally, to the case of the rejected Jews in the very age of the apostles. The purpose of God, as we have seen, was to abolish the former ground on which his visible church had for so many ages been built, that of natural descent from Abraham by Isaac and Jacob ; but this was so far from shutting out the Jews from spiritual blessings, that though, *as Jews*, they were now denied to be God’s church, yet they were all invited to come in with the Gentiles, or rather to lead the way into the new church established on the new principle of faith in Jesus, as the Christ. Hence the apostles were commanded to “begin at Jerusalem” to preach the Gospel ; hence they made the Jews the first offer in every place in Asia Minor, and other parts of the Roman empire, into which they travelled on the same blessed errand. Many of the Jews accepted the call, entered into the church state on the new principle on which the church of Christ was now to be *elected*, and hence they are called, by St. Paul, “the *remnant* according to the election of grace,” Rom. xi, 5, and “the *election*.” The rest, it is true, are said to have been “blinded ;” just in the same sense as Pharaoh was hardened. He hardened his own heart, and was judicially left to his obduracy ; they blinded themselves by their prejudices and worldliness and spiritual pride, and were at length judicially given up to blindness. But then might they not all have had a share in this new election into this new church of God ? Truly every one of them ; for thus the apostle argues, Rom. ix, 30–32, “What shall

(5) “Having conquered the Edomites, or Idumeans,” says Prideaux, “he reduced them to this necessity, either to *embrace the Jewish religion*, or else to leave the country, and seek new dwellings elsewhere ; whereon, choosing rather to leave their idolatry than their country, they all became proselytes to the Jewish religion,” &c.—Connex. vol. iii, pp. 365, 366.

we say then ? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith ; but Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. *Wherefore ?* BECAUSE THEY SOUGHT IT NOT BY FAITH, but, as it were, by the works of the law." And thus we have it plainly declared that they were excluded from the new spiritual church of God, not by any act of sovereignty, not by any decree of reprobation, but by an act of their own : they rejected the doctrine and way of faith ; they attained not unto righteousness, *because* they sought it not by faith.

The collective election and rejection taught in this chapter is not then unconditional, in the sense of the Calvinists ; and neither the salvation of the people elected, nor the condemnation of the people rejected, flows as necessary consequents from these acts of the Divine sovereignty. They are, indeed, mysterious procedures ; for doubtless it must be allowed that they place some portions of men in circumstances more favoured than others ; but even in such cases God has shut out the charge of "*unrighteousness*," by requiring from men according "to what they have, and not according to what they have not," as we learn from many parts of Scripture which reveal the *principles* of the Divine administration, both as to this life and another ; for no man is shut out from the mercy of God, but by his own fault. He has connected these events also with *wise and gracious general plans*, as to the human race. They are not acts of arbitrary will, or of caprice ; they are acts of "wisdom and knowledge," the mysterious bearings of which are to be in future times developed. "O the depth, both of the *wisdom* and *knowledge* of God ! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out !" These are the devout expressions with which St. Paul concludes this discourse ; but they would ill apply to the sovereign, arbitrary, and unconditional reprobation of men from God's mercies in time and eternity, on the principle of taking some and leaving others without any reason in themselves. There is no *plan* in this ; no wisdom ; no mystery ; and it is capable of no farther development for the instruction and benefit of the world ; for that which rests originally on no reason but solely on arbitrary will, is incapable, from its very nature, of becoming the component part of a deeply laid, and, for a time, mysterious *plan*, which is to be brightened into manifest wisdom, and to terminate in the good of mankind, and the glory of God.

The only argument of any weight which is urged to prove, that in the election spoken of in this discourse of St. Paul, individuals are intended, is, that though it should be allowed that the apostle is

*not by faith*

speaking of the election of bodies of men to be the visible church of God ; yet, as none are acknowledged by him to be his true church, except true believers ; therefore, the election of men to faith and eternal life, as individuals, must necessarily be included ; or rather, is the main thing spoken of. For as the spiritual seed of Abraham were the only persons allowed to be “the Israel of God” under the Old Testament dispensation ; and as, upon the rejection of the Jews, true believers only, both of Jews and Gentiles, were allowed to constitute the church of Christ, the spiritual seed of Abraham, under the law ; and genuine Christians, both of Jews and Gentiles, under the Gospel, are “*the election* ;” and “*the remnant according to the election of grace*,” mentioned by the apostle.

In this argument truth is greatly mixed up with error, which a few observations will disentangle.

1. It is a mere assumption, that the spiritual Israelites, under the law, in opposition to the Israelites by birth, are any where called “the election ;” and “the remnant according to the election of grace ;” or even alluded to under these titles. The first phrase occurs in Rom. xi, 7, “What then ? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for ; but the *election* hath obtained it, and the *rest* were blinded.” Here it is evident that “the election” means the Jews of that day, who believed in Christ, in opposition to “the rest,” who believed not ; in other words, “the election” was that part of the Jews, who had been chosen into the Christian church, by faith. The second phrase occurs in ver. 5, of the same chapter, “Even so, then, at *this present* time, also, there is a *remnant* according to the election of grace ;” where the same class of persons, the believing Jews, who submitted to the plan of election into the church by “*grace*,” through faith, are the only persons spoken of. Nor are these terms used to designate the believing Gentiles ; they belong exclusively to the Christianized portion of the Jewish nation, and as the contrary assumption is without any foundation, the inferences drawn from it are imaginary.

2. It is true that, under the Old Testament dispensation, the *spiritual* seed of Abraham, were the only part of the Israelites who were, with reference to their spiritual and eternal state, accepted of God ; but it is not true, that the election of which the apostle speaks, was confined to them. With reference to Esau and Jacob, the apostle says, Rom. ix, 11, 13, “For the children being not yet born, neither having done good or evil, that the purpose of God, *according to election*, might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth ; it was said unto her, the elder shall serve the younger ; as it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.” The



“election” here spoken of, or God’s purpose to elect, relates to Jacob being chosen in preference to Esau ; which election, as we have seen, respected the descendants of Jacob. Now, if this meant the election of the pious descendants of Jacob only, and not his natural descendants ; then the opposition between the election of the progeny of Jacob, and the non-election of the progeny of Esau, is destroyed ; and there was no reason to say “ Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated,” or loved less ; but the pious descendants of Jacob have I loved and elected ; and the rest I have not loved, and therefore have not elected. Some of the Calvinistic commentators have felt this difficulty, and therefore say, that these cases are not given as *examples* of the election and reprobation of which the apostle speaks ; but as *illustrations* of it. If considered as illustrations, they must be felt to be of a very perplexing kind ; for how the preference of one nation to another, when, as we have seen, this did not infallibly secure the salvation of the more favoured nation, nor the eternal destruction of the less favoured, can illustrate the election of individuals to eternal life, and the reprobation of other individuals to eternal death, is difficult to conceive. But they are manifestly *examples* of that *one election*, of which the apostle speaks throughout ; and not illustrations of one kind of election by another. They are the *instances* which he gives in proof that the election of the believing Jews of his day to be, along with the believing Gentiles, the visible church of God, and the rejection of the Jews after the flesh, was not contrary to the promises of God made to Abraham ; because God had, in former times, made distinctions between the natural descendants of Abraham as to church privileges, without any impeachment of his faithfulness to his word. Again, if the election of which the apostle speaks were that of pious Jews in all ages, so that they alone stood in a church relation to God, and were thus the only Jews in covenant with him ; how could he speak of the *rejection* of the other portion of the Jews ? Of their being *cut off* ? Of the *covenants* “pertaining” to them ? They could not be rejected, who were never received ; nor cut off, who were never branches in the stock ; nor have covenants pertaining to them, if in these covenants they had never been included.

3. This notion, that the ancient election of a part of the descendants of Abraham spoken of by the apostle was of the pious Jews only, and, therefore, a personal election, is, in part, grounded by these commentators upon a mistaken view of the meaning of the sixth, seventh, eighth, and ninth verses of this chapter ; in which they have been sometimes incautiously followed by those of very different sentiments, and who have thus somewhat entangled them-



selves. "Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel: neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed. For this is the word of promise, At this time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son." In this passage, the interpreters in question suppose that St. Paul distinguishes between the spiritual Israelites, and those of natural descent; between the spiritual seed of Abraham, and his seed according to the flesh. Yet the passage not only affords no evidence that this was his intention; but implies just the contrary. Our view of its meaning is given above; but it may be necessary to support it more fully.

Let it then be recollected that the apostle is speaking of that great event, the rejection of the Jews from being any longer the visible church of God, on account of natural descent; and that in this passage he shows that the purpose of God to construct his church upon a new basis, that of faith in Christ, although it would exclude the body of the Jewish people from this church, since they refused "the election of grace" through faith, would not prove that "the word of God had fallen" to the ground, or as the literal meaning of the original is rendered in our version, "has taken none effect." The word of God referred to can only be God's original promise to Abraham, to be "a God to him and to his seed after him;" which was often repeated to the Jews in after ages, in the covenant engagement, "I will be to you a God, and ye shall be to me a people;" a mode of expression which signifies, in all the connexions in which it stands, an engagement to acknowledge them as his visible church: he being publicly acknowledged on their part as "their God," or object of worship and trust; and they, on the other, being acknowledged by him as his peculiar "people." This, therefore, we are to take to be the sense of the promise to Abraham and to his seed. How then does the apostle prove that the "word of God had not fallen to the ground," although the natural seed of Abraham, the Jews of that day, had been rejected as his church? He proves it by showing that all the children of Abraham by natural descent had not, in the original intention of the promise, been "counted," or reckoned, as "the seed" to which these promises had been made; and this he establishes by referring to those acts of God by which he had, in his sovereign pleasure, conferred the church relation upon the descendants of Abraham only in certain lines, as in those of Isaac and Jacob, and excluded the others. In

this view, the argument is cogent to his purpose. By the exercise of the same sovereignty God had now resolved not to connect the church relation with natural descent, even in the line of Isaac and Jacob ; but to establish it on a ground which might comprehend the Gentile nations also, the common ground of faith in Christ. The mere children of the *flesh* were, therefore, in this instance excluded ; and “ the children of the promise,” the promise now made to believing Jews and Gentiles, those begotten by the word of the Gospel, were “ counted for the seed.” But though it is a great truth, that only the children of the Gospel promise are now “ counted for the seed ;” it does not follow that the children of the promise made to Sarah were all spiritual persons ; and, as such, the only subjects of that church relation which was connected with that circumstance. That the Gentiles who believed upon the publication of the Gospel were always contemplated as a part of that seed to which the promises were made, the apostle shows in a former part of the same epistle ; but that “ mystery” was not in early times revealed. God had not then formed, nor did he till the apostle’s age form his visible church solely on the principle of faith, and a moral relation. This is the character of the new, not of the old dispensation ; and the different grounds of the church relation were suited to the design of each. One was to preserve truth from extinction ; the other to extend it into all nations : in one, therefore, a single people, taken as a nation into political as well as religious relations with God, was made the deposite of the truth to be preserved ; in the other, a national distinction, and lines of natural descent, could not be recognised, because the object was to call all nations to the obedience of the same faith, and to place all on an equality before God. As the very ground of the church relation, then, under the Old Testament, was natural descent from Abraham ; and as it was mixed up and even identified with a political relation also, the ancient election of which the apostle speaks, could not be confined to spiritual Jews : and even if it could be proved, that the church of God, under the new dispensation, is to be confined to true believers only, yet that would not prove that the ancient church of God had that basis alone, since we know it had another, and a more general one. When, therefore, the apostle says, “ for they are not all Israel, which are of Israel,” the distinction is not between the spiritual and the natural Israelites ; but between that part of the Israelites who continued to enjoy church privileges, and those who were “ of Israel,” or descendants of Jacob, surnamed Israel, as the ten tribes and parts of the two, who, being dispersed among the heathen, for their sins, were no longer a part of God’s visible church. This is the first

instance which the apostle gives of the rejection of a part of the natural seed of Abraham from the promise. He strengthens the argument by going up higher, even to those who had immediately been born to Abraham, the very children of his body, Ishmael and Isaac. "The children of *the flesh*;" that is, Ishmael and his descendants, (so called, because he was born naturally, not supernaturally, as Isaac was, according to "the promise" made to Abraham and Sarah;)—they, says the apostle, are not the "children of God;" that is, as the context still shows, not "the seed" to whom the promise that he would be "a God to Abraham and his seed" was made: "but the children of the promise," that is, Isaac and his descendants, were "counted for the seed." And that we might not mistake this, "the promise" referred to is added by the apostle;—"for this is the word of the promise, At this time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son." Of this promise, the Israelites by natural descent, were as much "*the children*," as the spiritual Israelites; and, therefore, to confine it to the latter is wholly gratuitous, and contrary to the words of the apostle. It is indeed an interesting truth, that a deep and spiritual mystery ran through that part of the history of Abraham here referred to, which the apostle opens in his Epistle to the Galatians: "The children of the bond woman and her son," symbolized the Jews who sought justification by the law; and "the children of the promise," "the children of the free woman," those who were justified by faith, and born supernaturally, that is "born again," and made heirs of the heavenly inheritance. But these things, says St. Paul, are an "ALLEGORY;" and therefore could not be the thing allegorized, any more than a type can be the thing typified; for a type is always of an inferior nature to the antitype, and is indeed something earthly, adumbrating that which is spiritual and heavenly. It follows, therefore, that although the choosing of Isaac and his descendants, prefigured the choosing of true believers, (persons born supernaturally under the Gospel dispensation,) to be "the children of God;" and that the rejection of the "children of the flesh" typified the rejection of the unbelieving Jews from God's church, because they had nothing but natural descent to plead: nay, though we allow that these events might be *allegorical*, on one part, of the truly believing Israelites, in all ages; and on the other, of those who were Jews only "outwardly," and therefore, as to the heavenly inheritance, were not "heirs;" yet still that which typified, and represented in allegory these spiritual mysteries, was not the spiritual mystery itself. It was a comparatively gross and earthly representation of it; and the passage is, therefore, to be understood of the election of the natural



descendants of Isaac, as the children of the promise made to Sarah, to be "the seed" to which the promises of church privileges and a church relation were intended to be in force, though still subject to the election of the line of Jacob in preference to that of Esau; and subject again, at a still greater distance of time, to the election of the tribe of Judah, to continue God's visible church, till the coming of Messiah, whilst the ten tribes, who were equally "of Israel," were rejected.

4. That this election of bodies of men to be the visible church of God, involved the election of individuals into the true church of God, and consequently their election to eternal life, is readily acknowledged; but this weakens not in the least the arguments by which we have shown that the apostle, in this chapter, speaks of collective, and not of individual election: on the contrary, it establishes them. Let us, to illustrate this, first take the case of the ancient Jewish church.

The end of God's election of bodies of men to peculiar religious advantages is, doubtless as to the individuals of which these bodies are composed, their recovery from sin, and their eternal salvation. Hence, to all such individuals, superior means of instruction, and more efficient means of salvation are afforded along with a deeper responsibility. The election of an individual into the true church by writing his name in heaven, is however, an effect dependant upon the election of the body to which he belongs. It follows only from his personal repentance, and justifying faith; or else we must say, that men are members of the true spiritual church, before they repent and have justifying faith, for which, assuredly, we have no warrant in Scripture. Individual election is then another act of God, subsequent to the former. The former is sovereign and unconditional; the latter rests upon revealed reasons; and is not, as we shall just now more fully show, unconditional. These two kinds of election, therefore, are not to be confounded; and it is absurd to argue that collective election has no existence, because there is an individual election; since the latter, on the contrary, necessarily supposes the former. The Jews, as a body, had their visible church state, and outward privileges, although the pious Jews alone availed themselves of them to their own personal salvation. As to the Christian church, there is a great difference in its circumstances; but the principle, though modified, is still there.

The basis of this church was to be, not natural descent from a common head; marking out, as that church, some distinct family, tribe, and, as it increased in numbers, some one nation, invested too, as a nation must be, with a political character and state; but



faith in Christ. Yet even this faith supposes a previous sovereign and unconditional collective election. For, as the apostle argues, "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God : but how shall they hear without a preacher ? and how shall they preach except they be sent ?" Now this *sending* to one Gentile nation before another Gentile nation, a distinction which continues to be made in the administration of the Divine Government to this day, is that sovereign unconditional election of the people constituting that nation, to the means of becoming God's church by the preaching of the Gospel, through the men "*sent*" to them for this purpose. The persons who first believed, were for the most part real Christians, in the sense of being truly, and in heart turned to God. They could not generally go so far as to be baptized into the name of Christ, in the face of persecution, and in opposition to their own former prejudices, without a considerable previous ripeness of experience, and decision of character. Under the character of "*saints*," in the highest sense, the primitive churches are addressed in the apostolical epistles : and such we are bound to conclude they were ; or they would not have been so called by men who had the "discernment of spirits." Whatever then the number was, whether small or great, who first received the word of the Gospel in every place, they openly confessed Christ, assembled for public worship ; and thus the promise was fulfilled in them : "I will be to them a God," the object of worship and trust ; "and they shall be to me a people." They became God's visible church ; and for the most part entered into that, and into the true and spiritual church at the same time. But this was not the case with all the members ; and we have therefore still an election of bodies of men to a visible church state, independant of their election as "*heirs of eternal life*." The children of believers, even as children, and therefore incapable of faith, did not remain in the same state of alienation from God as the children of unbelievers ; nay, though but one parent believed, yet the children are pronounced by St. Paul, to be "*holy*." "For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife, by the husband : else, were your children *unclean* ; but now they are *holy*." When both parents believed, and trained up their families to believe in Christ, and to worship the true God, the case was stronger : the family was then "*a church in the house* ;" though all the members of it might not have saving faith. Sincere faith or assent to the Gospel, with desires of instruction and salvation, appear to have uniformly entitled the person to baptism ; and the use of Christian ordinances followed. The numbers of the visible church swelled till it comprehended cities, and at last coun-

tries ; whose inhabitants were thus elected to special religious privileges, and, forsaking idols and worshipping God, constituted his visible church among Gentile nations. And that the apostle Paul regarded all who “called upon the name of the Lord” as Christian churches, is evident from his asserting his authority of reproof, and counsel, and even excision over them, as to their unworthy members ; and also from his threatening the Gentile churches with the fate of the Jewish church ;—unless they stood by faith, they also should be “cut off ;” that is, be unchurched. Of his full meaning, subsequent history gives the elucidation in the case of those very churches in Asia Minor which he himself planted ; and which, departing from the faith of Christ, his true doctrine, have been, in many instances, “cut off,” and swallowed up in the Mohammedan delusion ; so that Christ is there no longer worshipped. The whole proves a sovereign unconditional election independent of personal election ; unconditional as to the people to whom the Gospel was first sent ; unconditional as to the children born of believing parents ; unconditional as to the inhabitants of those countries who, when a Christian church was first established among them, came, without seeking it, into the possession of invaluable and efficacious means and ordinances of Christian instruction and salvation ; and who all finally, by education, became professors of the true faith ; and, as far as assent goes, sincere believers. This election too, as in the Jewish church, was made with reference to a personal election into the true spiritual church of God ; but personal election was conditional. It rested, as we have seen, upon personal repentance and justifying faith ; or else we must hold that men could be members of the true church without either. This election was then dependant upon the other ; and, instead of disproving, abundantly confirms it. The tenor of the apostle’s argument sufficiently shows that the transfer of the church state and relation from one body of men to others, is that which in this discourse he has in view—in other words, he speaks of the election of bodies of men to religious advantages, not of individuals to eternal life ; and however intimately the one may be connected with the other, the latter is not necessarily involved in the former ; since superior religious privileges, in all ages, have, to many, proved but an aggravation of their condemnation.

The **THIRD** kind of election is personal election ; or the election of individuals to be the children of God, and the heirs of eternal life.

It is not at all disputed between us and those who hold the Calvinistic view of election, whether believers in Christ are called **THE ELECT** of God with reference to their individual state and individual

relation to God as his "people," in the highest sense of that phrase. Such passages as "the elect of God;" "chosen of God;" "chosen in Christ;" "elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father;" and many others, we allow therefore, although borrowed from that collective election of which we have spoken, to be descriptive of an act of grace in favour of certain persons considered individually.

The first question then which naturally arises, respects the import of that act of grace which is termed choosing, or an election. It is not a choosing to particular offices and service, which is the first kind of election we have mentioned; nor is it that collective election to religious privileges and a visible church state, on which we have more largely dwelt. For although "the elect" have an individual interest in such an election as parts of the collective body, thus placed in possession of the ordinances of Christianity; yet many others have the same advantages, who still remain under the guilt and condemnation of sin and practical unbelief. The individuals properly called "the elect," are they who have been made partakers of the grace and saving efficacy of the Gospel. "Many," says our Lord, "are *called*, but few *chosen*."

What true personal election is, we shall find explained in two clear passages of Scripture. It is explained negatively by our Lord, where he says to his disciples, "I have chosen you out of the world:" it is explained positively by St. Peter, when he addresses his first epistle to the "elect, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus." To be elected, therefore, is to be separated from "the world," and to be sanctified by the Spirit, and by the blood of Christ.

It follows, then, that election is not only an act of God done in *time*; but also that it is subsequent to the administration of the means of salvation. The "calling" goes before the "election;" the publication of the doctrine of "the Spirit," and the atonement, called by Peter "the sprinkling of the blood of Christ," before that "sanctification" through which they become "the elect" of God. The doctrine of *eternal election* is thus brought down to its true meaning. Actual election cannot be eternal; for, from eternity, the elect were not actually chosen out of the world, and from eternity, they could not be "sanctified unto obedience." The phrases, "eternal election," and "eternal decree of election," so often in the lips of Calvinists, can, in common sense, therefore, mean only an eternal *purpose* to elect; or a purpose formed *in eternity*, to elect, or choose out of the world, and sanctify *in time*, by "the Spirit and



the blood of Jesus.” This is a doctrine which no one will contend with them ; but when they graft upon it another, that God hath, from eternity, “ chosen in Christ unto salvation,” a set number of men, “ *certam quorundam hominum multitudinem* ;” not upon foresight of faith and the obedience of faith, holiness, or of any other good quality, or disposition, (as a cause or condition before required in man to be chosen ;) but unto faith, and the obedience of faith, holiness, &c, “ *non ex prævisa fide, fideique obedientia, sanctitate, aut alia aliqua bona qua litate et dispositione*,” &c, (6) it presents itself under a different aspect, and requires an appeal to the Word of God.

This view of election has two parts : it is the choosing of a *set or determinate* number of men, who cannot be increased or diminished ; and it is *unconditional*. Let us consider each.

With respect to the first, there is no text of Scripture which teaches that a fixed and determinate number of men are elected to eternal life ; and the passages which the Synod of Dort adduce in proof, being such as they only *infer* the doctrine from, the Synod themselves allow that they have no express scriptural evidence for this tenet. But if there is no explicit scripture in favour of the opinion, there is much against it ; and to this test it must, therefore, be brought.

The election here spoken of must either be election in eternity, or election in time. If the former, it can only mean a *purpose* of electing in time : if the latter, it is *actual* election, or choosing out of the world.

Now as to God’s eternal purpose to elect, it is clear, that is a subject on which we can know nothing but from his own revelation. We take, then, the matter on this ground. A purpose to elect, is a purpose to save ; and when it is explicitly declared in this revelation that God “ willeth all men to be saved,” and that “ he willeth not the death of a sinner,” either we must say, that his will is contrary to his purpose, which would be to charge God foolishly, and indeed has no meaning at all ; or it agrees with his purpose : If then his will agrees with his purpose, that purpose was not confined to a “ certain determinate number of men ;” but extended to all “ *whosoever*” should believe, that they might be elected and saved.

Again, we have established it as the doctrine of Scripture, that our Lord Jesus Christ died for all men, that all men through him might be saved ; but if he died in order to their salvation through faith, he died in order to their election through faith ; and God must have purposed this from eternity.

Farther, we have his own message to all to whom his servants preach the Gospel. They are commanded to preach “ to every



creature,”—“He that believeth shall be saved; and he that believeth not shall be damned.” This is an unquestionable decree of God in time; and, if God be unchangeable, it was his decree, as touching this matter, from all eternity. But this decree or purpose can in no way be reconciled to the doctrine of an eternal purpose to elect only “a set and determinate number.” For the Gospel could not be *good news* to “every creature” to whom it should be *as such* proclaimed, which is the first contradiction to the text. Nor would those who believe it not, but who are nevertheless commanded to believe it, have any power to believe it, which is the second contradiction: for since they are to be “damned” for not believing, they must have had the power to believe, or they could not have come into condemnation for an act impossible to them to perform, or else we must admit it as a principle of the Divine government that God commands his creatures to do, what under no circumstances they can do; and then punishes them for not doing what he thus commands. Finally, he commands those that believe not, and who are alleged not to be included in this “fixed number” of elected persons, to believe the good tidings, as a matter in which they are interested: they are commanded to believe the Gospel as a truth; but if they are not interested in it, they are commanded to believe a falsehood, which is the third contradiction; and thus the text and the doctrine cannot consist together.

As the whole argument on this point is involved in what we have already established concerning the universal extent of the benefits of Christ’s death, we may leave it to be determined by what has been advanced on that topic; observing only, that two of the points there confirmed bear directly upon the doctrine, that election is confined to a “fixed number of men.” If we have proved from Scripture, that the reason of the condemnation of men lies in themselves, and not in the want of a sufficient and effectual provision having been made in Christ for their salvation, then the number of the actually elect might be *increased*; and if it has been established that those for whom Christ died might “perish;” and that true believers may “turn back unto perdition,” and be “cast away,” and fall into a state in which it were better for them “never to have known the way of righteousness,” then the number of the elect may be *diminished*. To what has already been said on these subjects the reader is referred; and we shall now only mention a few of the difficulties with which the doctrine of an election from eternity of a determinate number of men to be made heirs of eternal life is attended.

Whether men will look to the dark and repugnant side of this

doctrine of the eternal election of a certain number of men unto salvation, or not, it unavoidably follows from it, that all but the persons so chosen in Christ, are placed utterly and absolutely, from their very birth, out of the reach of salvation; and have no share at all in the saving mercies of God, who from eternity purposed to reject them, and that not for their fault as sinners. For all, except Adam and Eve, have come into the world with a nature which, left to itself, could not but sin; and as the determination of God, never to give the reprobate the means of avoiding sin, could not rest upon their *fault*, for what is absolutely inevitable cannot be charged on man as his fault, so it must rest where all the high Calvinistic divines place it,—upon the mere will and sovereign pleasure of God.

The difficulties of reconciling such a scheme as this to the nature of God, not as it is fancied by man, but as it is revealed in his own word; and to many other declarations of Scripture as to the principles of the administration both of his law and of his grace; one would suppose insuperable by any mind, and indeed are so revolting, that few of those who cling to the doctrine of election will be found bold enough to keep them steadily in sight. They even think it uncandid for us who oppose these views to pursue them to their legitimate logical consequences. But in discussion this is inevitable; and if it be done in fairness, and in the spirit of candour, without pushing hard arguments into hard words, the cause of truth, and a right understanding of the Word of God, will thereby be promoted.

The doctrine of the election to eternal life only of a certain determinate number of men to salvation, involving, as it necessarily does, the doctrine of the absolute and unconditional reprobation of all the rest of mankind, cannot, we may confidently affirm, be reconciled,

1. To the LOVE of God. “God is Love.” “He is loving to *every man*: and his tender mercies are over *all* his works.”

2. Nor to the WISDOM of God; for the bringing into being a vast number of intelligent creatures under a necessity of sinning, and of being eternally lost, teaches no moral lesson to the world; and contradicts all those notions of wisdom in the ends and processes of government which we are taught to look for, not only from natural reason, but from the Scriptures.

3. Nor to the GRACE of God, which is so often magnified in the Scriptures: “for doth it argue any sovereign or high strain; any superabounding richness of grace or mercy in any man, when ten thousand have equally offended him, only to pardon one or two of

them?" (7) And on such a scheme can there be any interpretation given of the passage, "that where sin had abounded, grace might much more abound?" or in what sense has "the grace of God appeared unto *all men*;" or even to one millionth part of them?

4. Nor can this merciless reprobation be reconciled to any of those numerous passages in which Almighty God is represented as tenderly compassionate, and pitiful to the worst and most unworthy of his creatures, even them who finally perish. "I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth:" "Being grieved at the hardness of their hearts." "How often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not." The Lord is long suffering to us-ward, not willing that *any* should perish." "Or despisest thou the *riches* of his goodness, and forbearance, and long suffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance."

5. It is as manifestly contrary to his JUSTICE. Here, indeed, we would not assume to measure this attribute of God, by unauthorized human conceptions; but when God himself has appealed to those established notions of justice and equity which have been received among all enlightened persons, in all ages, as the measure and rule of his own, we cannot be charged with this presumption. "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do *right*?" "Are not my ways *equal*?" saith the Lord." We may then be bold to affirm, that justice and equity in God are what they are taken to be among reasonable men; and if all men every where would condemn it, as most contrary to justice and right, that a sovereign should condemn to death one or more of his subjects, for not obeying laws which it is absolutely impossible for them, under any circumstances which they can possibly avail themselves of, to obey, and much more the greater part of his subjects; and to require them, on pain of aggravated punishment, to do something in order to the pardon and remission of their offences, which he knows they cannot do, say to stop the tide or to remove a mountain; it implies a charge as awfully and obviously unjust against God, who is so "holy and just in all his doings," so exactly "just in the judgments which he executeth," as to silence all his creatures, to suppose him to act precisely in the same manner as to those whom he has passed by and rejected, without any avoidable fault of their own; to destroy them by the simple rule of his own sovereignty, or, in other words, to show that he has power to do it. In whatever light the subject be viewed, no fault, in any right construction, can be chargeable upon the persons so punished, or, as we may rather say, *destroyed*, since punishment

(7) GOODWIN'S Agreement and Difference.



supposes a judicial proceeding, which this act shuts out. For either the reprobates are destroyed for a pure reason of sovereignty, without any reference to their sinfulness, and thus all criminality is left out of the consideration ; or they are destroyed for the sin of Adam, to which they were not consenting ; or for personal faults resulting from a corruption of nature which they brought into the world with them, and which God wills not to correct, and they have no power to correct themselves. Every received notion of justice is thus violated. We grant, indeed, that some proceedings of the Almighty may appear at first irreconcilable with justice, which are not so ; as that we should suffer pain and death, and be infected with a morally corrupt nature, in consequence of the transgression of our first progenitors ; that children should suffer for their parents' faults in the ordinary course of providence ; and that, in general calamities, the comparatively innocent should suffer the same evils as the guilty. But none of these are parallel cases. For the "free gift" has come upon all men, "in order to justification of life," through "the righteousness" of the second Adam, so that the terms of our probation are but changed. None are doomed to inevitable ruin, or the above words of the apostle would have no meaning ; and pain and death, as to all who avail themselves of the remedy, are made the instruments of a higher life, and of a superabounding of grace through Christ. The same observation may be made as to children who suffer evils for their parents' faults. This circumstance alters the terms of their probation ; but if every condition of probation leaves to men the possibility and the hope of eternal life, and the circumstances of all are balanced and weighed by him who administers the affairs of individuals on principles, the end of which is to turn all the evils of life into spiritual and higher blessings, there is, obviously, no impeachment of justice in the circumstances of the probation assigned to any person whatever. As to the innocent suffering equally with the guilty in general calamities, the persons so suffering are but COMPARATIVELY innocent, and their personal transgressions against God deserve a higher punishment than any which this life witnesses ; this may also as to them be overruled for merciful purposes, and a future life presents its manifold compensations. But as to the non-elect, the whole case, in this scheme of sovereign reprobation, or sovereign preterition, is supposed to be before us. Their state is fixed, their afflictions in this life will not in any instance be overruled for ends of edification and salvation ; they are left under a necessity of sinning in every condition ; and a future life presents no compensation, but a fearful looking for of fiery and quenchless indignation. It is surely not possible for the



ingenuity of man to reconcile this to any notion of just government which has ever obtained ; and by the established notions of justice and equity in human affairs, *we are taught by the Scriptures themselves to judge of the Divine proceedings in all completely stated and comprehensible cases.*

6. Equally impossible is it to reconcile this notion to the SINCERITY of God in offering salvation by Christ to all who hear the Gospel, of whom this scheme supposes the majority, or at least great numbers, to be among the reprobate. The gospel, as we have seen, is commanded to be preached to "every creature;" which publication of "good news to every creature," is an offer of salvation "to every creature," accompanied with earnest invitations to embrace it, and admonitory comminations lest any should neglect and despise it. But does it not involve a serious reflection upon the truth and sincerity of God which men ought to shudder at, to assume, at the very time the Gospel is thus preached, that no part of this good news was ever *designed* to benefit the majority, or any great part of those to whom it is addressed ? that they to whom this love of God in Christ is proclaimed were never loved by God ? that he has decreed that many to whom he offers salvation, and whom he invites to receive it, shall never be saved ? and that he will consider their sins aggravated by rejecting that which they never could receive, and which he never designed them to receive ? It is no answer to this to say, that we also admit that the offers of mercy are made by God to many whom he, by virtue of his prescience, knows will never receive them. We grant this ; but, not now to enter upon the question of foreknowledge, it is enough to reply, that here there is no insincerity. On the Calvinian scheme the offer of salvation is made to those for whose sins Christ made no atonement ; on ours, he made atonement for the sins of all. On the former, the offer is made to those whom God never designed to embrace it ; on ours, to none but those whom God seriously and in truth wills that they should avail themselves of it ; on their theory, the bar to the salvation of the non-elect lies in the want of a provided sacrifice for sin ; on ours, it rests solely in men themselves ; one consists, therefore, with a perfect sincerity of offer, the other cannot be maintained without bringing the sincerity of God into question, and fixing a stigma upon his moral truth.

7. Unconditional *reprobation* cannot be reconciled with that frequent declaration of Scripture, that GOD IS NO RESPECTER OF PERSONS. This phrase, we grant, is not to be interpreted as though the bounties of the Almighty were dispensed in equal measures to his creatures. In the administration of favour, there is place for

the exercise of that prerogative which, in a just sense, is called the sovereignty of God ; but *justice* knows but of one rule ; it is, in its nature, settled and fixed, and respects not the PERSON, but the CASE. "To have respect of persons" is a phrase, therefore, in Scripture, which sometimes refers to judicial proceedings, and signifies to judge from partiality and affection, and not upon the merits of the question. It is also used by St. Peter with reference to the acceptance of Cornelius : "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons ; but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him." Here it is clear, that to respect persons, would be to reject or accept them without regard to their moral qualities, and on some national or other prejudice or partiality which forms no moral rule of any kind. But if the doctrine of absolute election and reprobation be true ; if we are to understand that men like Jacob and Esau, in the Calvinistic construction of the passage, whilst in the womb of their mother, nay from eternity, are loved and hated, elected or reprobated, before they have done "good or evil," then it necessarily follows, that there is precisely this kind of respect of persons with God ; for his acceptance or rejection of men stands on some ground of aversion or dislike, which cannot be resolved into any *moral rule*, and has no respect to the *merits of the case itself* ; and if the Scripture affirms that there is no such respect of persons with God, then the doctrine which implies it is contradicted by inspired authority.

8. The doctrine of which we are showing the difficulties, brings with it the repulsive and shocking opinion of the ETERNAL PUNISHMENT OF INFANTS. Some Calvinists have indeed, to get rid of the difficulty, or rather to put it out of sight, consigned them to annihilation ; but of the annihilation of any human being there is no intimation in the Word of God. In order, therefore, to avoid the fearful consequence of admitting the punishment of beings innocent as to all actual sin, there is no other way than to suppose all children, dying in infancy, to be an elected portion of mankind, which, however, would be a mere hypothesis brought in to serve a theory without any evidence. That some of those who, as they suppose, are under this sentence of reprobation, die in their infancy, is, probably, what most Calvinists allow ; and if their doctrine be received cannot be denied ; and it follows, therefore, that all such infants are eternally lost. Now we know that infants are not lost because our Lord gave it as a reason why little children ought not to be hindered from coming unto him, that "of such is the kingdom of heaven." On which Calvin himself remarks,(8) "in this word, 'for

(8) Harm. in Matt. xix, 13.

of such is the kingdom of heaven,' Christ comprehends as well *little children themselves*, as those who in disposition *resemble* them. *Hac voce, tam parvulos, quam eorum similes, comprehendit.*" We are assured of the salvation of infants, also, because "the free gift has come upon all men to [in order to] justification of life," and because children are not capable of rejecting that blessing, and must, therefore, derive benefit from it. The point, also, on which we have just now touched, that "there is no respect of persons with God," demonstrates it. For, as it will be acknowledged, that some children, dying in infancy, are saved, it must follow, from this principle and axiom in the Divine government, that all infants are saved: for the case of all infants, as to innocence or guilt, sin or righteousness, being the same, and God, as a judge, being "no respecter of persons," but regarding only the merits of the case; he cannot make this awful distinction as to them, that one part shall be eternally saved and the other eternally lost. That doctrine, therefore, which implies the perdition of infants cannot be congruous to the Scriptures of truth; but is utterly abhorrent to them.(9)

9. Finally, not to multiply these instances of the difficulties which accompany the doctrine of absolute reprobation, or of preterition, (to use the milder term, though the argument is not in the least changed by it,) it destroys the end of PUNITIVE JUSTICE. That end can only be to deter men from offence, and to add strength to the law of God. But if the whole body of the reprobate are left to the influence of their fallen nature without remedy, they cannot be deterred from sin by threats of inevitable punishment; nor can they ever submit to the dominion of the law of God: their doom is fixed, and threats and examples can avail nothing.

We may leave every candid mind to the discussion of these and many other difficulties, suggested by the doctrine of the Synod of Dort, as to the election of "a set and determinate number of men" to eternal life; and proceed to consider the second branch of this opinion—that election is unconditional. "It was made," says the synod, "not upon foresight of faith, and the obedience of faith, holiness, or any other good quality or disposition, (as a cause or condition before required in men to be chosen,) but *unto* faith, and the obedience of faith, holiness, &c."

Election, we have already said, must be either God's purpose in eternity to elect actually, or it must be actual election itself in time; for as election is choosing men "out of the world," into the true church of Christ, *actual* election from eternity is not possible, because the subjects of election had no existence; there was no world

(9) On the case of infants see vol. ii, part 2, page 221.



to choose them "out of," and no church into which to bring them. To affirm that any part of mankind were chosen from eternity, in purpose, (for in no other way could they be chosen,) to become members of the church without "foresight of faith, and the obedience of faith;" is therefore to say, that God purposed from all eternity to establish a distinction between THE WORLD, "out" of which the elect are actually chosen, and the CHURCH, which has no foundation in, or respect to, faith and obedience; in other words, to constitute his church of persons to whose faith and obedience he had no respect. For how is this conclusion to be avoided? The subject of this election, it seems, are chosen *as men*, as Peter, James, and John, not as believers. God eternally purposed to make Peter, James, and John members of his church, without respect to their faith or obedience; his church is therefore constituted on the sole principle of this purpose, not upon the basis of faith and obedience; and the persons chosen into it in time are chosen because they are of the number included in this eternal purpose, and with no regard to their being believers and obedient, or the contrary. How manifestly this opposes the Word of God we need scarcely stay to point out. It contradicts that specific distinction constantly made in Scripture between the true church and the world, the only marks of distinction being, as to the former, faith and obedience; and as to the latter, unbelief and disobedience—in other words, the church is composed not merely of men, as Peter, James, and John; but of Peter, James, and John believing and obeying: whilst all who believe not, and obey not, are "the world." The Scriptures make the essential elements of the church to be believing and obeying men; the Synod of Dort makes them to be men in the simple condition of being included in a set and determinate number, chosen with no respect to faith and obedience. Thus we have laid two very different foundations upon which to place the superstructure of the church of Christ; one of them indeed is to be found in the Scriptures, but the other only in the theories of men; and as they agree not together, one of them must be renounced.

But election, without respect to faith, is contrary also to the history of the commencement and first constitution of the church of Christ. Peter, James, and John did not become disciples of Christ in unbelief and disobedience. The very act of their becoming disciples of Christ, unequivocally implied some degree both of faith and obedience. They were chosen, not as men, but as believing men. This is indicated also by the grand rite of baptism, instituted by Christ when he commissioned his disciples to preach the Gospel, and call men into his church. That baptism was the gate into this church



cannot be denied ; but faith was required in order to baptism ; and, where true faith existed, this open confession of Christ would necessarily follow, without delay. Here, then, we see on what grounds men were actually elected into the church of Christ ; it was with respect to their faith that they were thus chosen out of the world, and thus chosen into the church. The rule, too, is universal, and if so, if it universally holds good that actual election has respect to faith, then, unless God's eternal *purpose* to elect be at variance with his electing, that is, unless he purposes one thing and does another differing from his purpose ; purposes to elect without respect to faith ; and only actually elects with respect to faith ; his eternal purpose to elect had respect both to faith and obedience.

It is true, that the Synod of Dort says, that election is "*unto* faith, and the obedience of faith," &c, thereby making the end of election to be faith : in other words their doctrine is, that some men were personally chosen to believe and obey, even before they existed. But we have no such doctrine in Scripture as the election of individuals *unto* faith ; and it is inconsistent with several passages which expressly speak of personal election.

"Many are called and few chosen." In this passage we must understand, that the many who are *called*, are called to believe and obey the Gospel, or the calling means nothing ; in other words they are not called. But if the end of this calling be faith and obedience, and the end of election also be faith and obedience, then have we in the text a senseless tautology ; for if the many are called to believe and obey, then, of course, we need not have been told that the few are chosen to believe and obey, since the few are included in the many. But if the "choosing" of the "few" means, as it must, something different to the "calling" of the "many," then is the end of election different to the end of calling ; and if the election be, as is plain from the passage, consequent upon the calling, then it can mean nothing else than the choosing of those "few" of the "many," who being obedient to the "calling," had previously believed and obeyed, into the true church and family of God, which is the proper and direct object of personal election. This passage, therefore, which unquestionably speaks of personal election, contradicts the notion of an election *unto* faith and obedience, and makes our election *consequent* upon our obedience to the calling, or evangelical invitation.

Let this notion of personal election *unto* faith be tested also by another passage, in which, like the former, personal election is spoken of. "I have chosen you out of the world," John xv, 19. According to the notion of the Synod of Dort, the act of election

consists in appointing or ordaining a certain number of the human race to believe and obey; here the personal electing act is a choosing out of the world, a choosing, manifestly, into the number of Christ's disciples, which no man is capable of without a previous faith; for the very act of becoming Christ's disciple was a confession of faith in him.

A third passage, in which election is spoken of as personal, or at least with more direct reference to individual experience, than to Christians in their collective capacity as the church of Christ, is 1 Peter i, 2, "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus!" Here obedience is not the end of election, but of the sanctification of the Spirit; and both are joined "with the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus," (which, in all cases, is apprehended by faith,) as the *media* through which our election is effected—"elect *through* sanctification of the Spirit," &c. These cannot, therefore, be the *ends* of our personal election; for if we are elected "*through*" that sanctification of the Spirit which produces obedience, we are not elected, being unsanctified and disobedient, in order to be sanctified by the Spirit that we may obey: it is the work of the Spirit which produces obedient faith, and through both we are "elected" into the church of God.

Very similar to the passage just explained is 2 Thess. ii, 13, 14, "But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren, because God hath from the beginning chosen you unto salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth; whereunto he called you by our Gospel to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ." As the apostle had been predicting the future apostasy of persons professing Christianity, he recollects, with gratitude, that from "*the beginning*," from the very first reception of the Gospel in Thessalonica, which was preached there by St. Paul himself with great success, the Thessalonians had manifested no symptoms of this apostasy, but had been honourably steadfast in the faith. For this he gives thanks to God in the verses above quoted, and in the 15th exhorts them still "to stand fast." When, therefore, Calvinistic commentators interpret the clause "hath chosen you from the beginning," to mean election from eternity, they make a gratuitous assumption which has nothing in the scope of the passage to warrant it. Mr. Scott, indeed, (1) rather depends upon the "calling" of the Thessalonians being, as he states, *subsequent* to their election, then, upon an arbitrary interpretation of the clause "from the *beginning*," and says, "if the *calling* of the

(1) Notes in loc.

*It is surely not inconsistent with the passage.*

Thessalonians was the effect of any preceding choice of them, it comes to the same thing whether the choice was made the preceding day, or from the foundation of the world." But the calling of the members of this church is not represented by the apostle as the *effect* of their having been chosen, but on the contrary, their election is spoken of as the effect of "the sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth;" and these, as the effects of the calling of the Thessalonians by the Gospel,—“whereunto,” to which sanctification and faith, “he called you by our Gospel.” Or the whole may be considered as the antecedent to the next clause “to which” election from the beginning, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth, “he called you by our Gospel.” Certain it is, that sanctification and belief of the truth cannot be the ends of election if they are the *means* of it, as they are here said to be; and we may therefore conclude from this, as well as from the other passages we have quoted as speaking of the personal election of believers, that this kind of election is not “*unto* faith and obedience,” as stated in “the Judgment of the Synod of Dort,” that is, a choice of individuals to be made believers and obedient persons; but an election, as it is expressed both by St. Peter and St. Paul, *through* faith and obedience; or, in other words, a choice of persons already believing and obedient into the family of God.

There are scarcely any other passages in the New Testament, which speak expressly of personal election; but there is another class of texts in which the term election occurs, which refer to believers, not distributively, but collectively; not personally, but as a body, either existing as particular churches, or as the universal church; and, by entirely overlooking, or ingeniously confounding this obvious distinction, the advocates of unconditional personal election bring forward such passages with confidence, as proofs of the doctrine of election *unto* faith furnished by the word of God. Thus the Synod of Dort quotes, as the leading proof of its doctrine of personal election, Eph. i, 4, 5, 6, “According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ, to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.” This, indeed, is the only passage quoted by the Synod of Dort, in which the terms chosen and election occur; and, we may ask, why none of those on which we have above offered some remarks, were quoted also, since the subject of *personal* election is much more obviously contained in them than in that which they have adduced?



The only answer is, that the others were perceived not to accord with the doctrine of "election *unto* faith and obedience;" whilst this, in which the personal election of individual believers is not referred to, but the collective election of the whole body of Christians, was better suited to give a colour to their doctrine, because it speaks, of course, and as the subject required, of election as the *means* of faith, and of faith as the *end* of election, an order which is reversed when the election of *individuals*, or the election of any body of believers, considered *distributively* and *personally*, is the subject of the apostle's discourse. If, indeed, the election spoken of in this passage were personal election, the Calvinistic doctrine would not follow from it; because it would admit of being questioned, whether the choosing in Christ before the foundation of the world, here mentioned, was a choice of certain persons, as *men* merely, or as *believing men*, which is surely the most rational. For all choice necessarily supposes some reason; but, as *men*, all things were equal between those who, according to this scheme, were chosen, and those who were passed by. But, according to the Calvinists, this election was made *arbitrarily*, that is, without any reason, but that God would have it so; and to this sense they bend the clause in the passage under consideration, "according to the *good pleasure* of his will." This phrase has, however, no such arbitrary sense. "The good pleasure of his will" means the benevolent and full acquiescence of the will of God with a wise and gracious act; and, accordingly, in verse 11, the phrase is varied "according to the COUNSEL of his own will," an expression which is at utter variance with the repulsive notion that mere will is in any case the rule of the Divine conduct, or, in other words, that he does any thing merely because he will do it, which excludes all "counsel." To choose men to salvation considered as believers, gives a reason for election which not only manifests the wisdom and goodness of God, but has the advantage of being entirely consistent with his own published and express decree: "he that believeth shall be saved; and he that believeth not shall be damned." This revealed and promulgated decree, we must believe, was according to his eternal purpose; and if from eternity he determined that believers, and only believers in Christ, among the fallen race, should be saved, the conclusion is inevitable that those whom he chose in Christ "before the foundation of the world," were considered, not as *men* merely, which gives no reason of choice worthy of any rational being, much less of the ever blessed God; but as believing men, which harmonizes the doctrine of election with the other doctrines of Scripture, instead of placing it, as in the Calvinistic scheme, in opposition to

them. For the choice not being of certain men, as such ; but of all persons believing ; and all men to whom the Gospel is preached, being called to believe, every one may place himself in the number of the persons so elected. Thus we get rid of the doctrine of the election of a set and determinate number of men ; and with that, of the fearful consequence, the absolute reprobation of all the rest, which so few Calvinists themselves have the courage to avow and maintain.

But though this argument might be very successfully urged against those who interpret the passage above quoted of personal election, the context bears unequivocal proofs that it is not of an election or predestination of this kind of which the apostle speaks ; but of the election of believing Jews and Gentiles into the church of God ; in other words, of the eternal purpose of God, upon the publication of the Gospel, to constitute his visible church no longer upon the ground of natural descent from Abraham, but upon the foundation of faith in Christ. For upon no other hypothesis can that distinction which the apostle makes between the Jews who first believed, and the Gentile Ephesians, who afterwards believed, be at all explained. He speaks first of the election of Christians in general, whether Jews or Gentiles ; using the pronouns “us” and “we” as comprehending himself and all others. He then proceeds to the “predestination” of those “who *first* trusted in Christ :” plainly meaning himself and other believing Jews. He goes on to say, that the Ephesians were made partakers of the same faith, and therefore were the subjects of the same election and predestination : “in whom ye also trusted after that ye heard the word of truth :” the preaching of which truth to them as Gentiles, by the apostle and his coadjutors, was, in consequence of God “having made known unto them the mystery of his will, that in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might *gather together in one* all things in Christ ;” which, in the next chapter, a manifest continuance of the same head of discourse, is explained to mean the calling in of the Gentiles with the believing Jews, reconciling “both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby.” The same subject he pursues in the third chapter, representing this union of believing Jews and Gentiles in one church as the revelation of the mystery which had been hid “from the beginning of the world ;” but was now manifested “according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord,” verses 8–11. Here then we have the true meaning of the election and predestination of the Ephesians spoken of in the opening of the epistle : it was their election, as Gentiles, to be, along with the believing Jews,

the church of God, his acknowledged people on earth ; which election was according to God's "eternal purpose," to change the constitution of his church ; to establish it on the ground of faith in Christ : and thus to extend it into all nations. So far as this respected the Ephesians in general, their election to hear the Gospel sooner than many other Gentiles was unconditional and sovereign, and was an election "*unto* faith and obedience of faith ;" that is to say, these were the *ends* of that election ; but so far as the Ephesians were concerned, as individuals, they were actually chosen into the church of Christ as its vital members, *on their believing* ; and so the election to the saving benefits of the Gospel was *a consequence of their faith*, and not the end of it, and was therefore conditional—"in whom also ye trusted, after that ye heard the Word of Truth, the Gospel of your salvation ; in whom also, *after that ye believed*, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise."

The Calvinistic doctrine of election *unto* faith has no stronger passage than this to lean upon for support ; and this manifestly fails them : whilst other passages in which the terms election, or chosen occur, all favour a very different view of the Scripture doctrine. When we are commanded to be diligent "to make our calling and *election* sure," or firm, this supposes that it may be rendered nugatory by want of diligence ; a doctrine which cannot comport with the absolute certainty of our salvation as founded upon a decree determining, infallibly, our personal election to eternal life, and our faith and obedience in order to it. When believers are called a "*chosen* generation," they are also called "a royal priesthood, a holy people ;" and if the latter characteristics depend upon, and are consequences of *faith*, so the former depends upon a previous faith, and is the consequence of it. Finally, although these terms themselves occur in but few passages, and in all of them which respect the personal experience of individuals express, or necessarily imply, the previous condition of faith, there are many others, which, in different terms, embody the same doctrine. The phrases to be "*IN* Christ," and to be "*CHRIST's*," are, doubtless, equivalent to the personal election of believers : and these, and similar modes of expression, are constantly occurring in the New Testament ; but no man is ever represented as "*Christ's*," or as "*in* Christ," by an eternal election *unto* faith ; but, on the contrary, as entering into that relation which is termed being "*IN* Christ ;" or being "*Christ's*," through personal faith alone. The Scripture knows no such distinctions as *elect unbelievers*, and *elect believers* ; but all unbelievers are represented as "of the world ;" under "condemnation," so that "the wrath of God abideth upon them ;"



and as liable to eternal ruin. But if Calvinistic election be true, then there are elect unbelievers; and with respect to these, the doctrine of Scripture is contradicted: for they are not "of the world," though in a state of unbelief, since God from eternity "chose them out of the world;" they are not under condemnation, "but were justified from eternity;" "the wrath of God does not abide upon them," for they are objects of an unchangeable love which has decreed their salvation: subject to no conditions whatever; and therefore no state of unbelief can make them objects of wrath, as no condition of faith can make them objects of a love which was moved by no such consideration. Nor are they liable to ruin. They never were, nor can be liable to it: the very threats of God are without meaning as to them, and their consciousness of guilt and danger under the awakenings of the Spirit are deceptive, and unreal; contradicting the work of the Spirit in the heart of man, as THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH. For if he "convinces them of sin," he convinces them of danger; but they are, *in fact*, in no danger; and the monstrous conclusion follows inevitably, that the Spirit is employed in exciting fears which have no foundation.

We have thus considered the scriptural doctrine of election; and as we find nothing in it which can warrant any one to limit the meaning of the texts we have adduced to prove that Christ made an actual atonement for the sins of all mankind, we may proceed to examine another class of Scripture proofs quoted by Calvinists to strengthen their argument:—those which speak of the "*calling*," and "*predestination*" of believers.

The terms "to call," "called," and "calling," very frequently occur in the New Testament, and especially in the Epistles. Sometimes "to call" signifies to invite to the blessings of the Gospel, to offer salvation through Christ, either by God himself, or under his appointment, by his servants; and in the parable of the marriage of the king's son, Matt. xxii, 1-14, which appears to have given rise to many instances of the use of this term in the Epistles, we have three descriptions of "called," or invited persons. First, the disobedient who would not come in at the call; but made light of it. Second, the class of persons represented by the man who, when the king came in to see his guests, had not on the wedding garment; and with respect to whom our Lord makes the general remark, "for many are called, but few are chosen." The persons thus represented by this individual culprit, were not only "called," but actually came into the company. Third, the approved guests; those who were both called and chosen. As far as the simple calling, or invitation is concerned, all these three classes stand upon

equal ground ; all were invited ; and it depended upon their choice and conduct whether they embraced the invitation, and were admitted as guests. We have nothing here to countenance the Calvinistic fiction, which is termed "effectual calling." This implies an irresistible influence exerted upon all the approved guests, but withheld from the disobedient, who could not, therefore, be otherwise than disobedient ; or at most could only come in without that wedding garment, which it was never put into their power to take out of the king's wardrobe ; the want of which, would necessarily exclude them, if not from the church on earth, yet from the church in heaven. The doctrine of the parable is in entire contradiction to this ; for they who refused, and they who complied but partially with the calling, are represented, not merely as being left without the benefit of the feast ; but as incurring additional guilt and condemnation for refusing the invitation. It is to this offer of salvation by the Gospel, this invitation to spiritual and eternal benefits, that St. Peter appears to refer, when he says, Acts ii, 39, "For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall CALL : " a passage which, we may observe, in passing, declares "the promise" to be as extensive as the "calling ;" in other words, as the *offer* or invitation. To this also, St. Paul refers, Rom. i, 5, 6. "By whom we have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name : " that is, to publish his Gospel, in order to bring all nations to the obedience of faith ; "among whom are ye also the CALLED of Jesus Christ ;" you at Rome have heard the Gospel, and have been invited to salvation in consequence of this design. This promulgation of the Gospel, by the ministry of the apostle, personally, under the name of *calling*, is also referred to in Galatians, i, 6, "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that *called you* into the grace of Christ," (obviously meaning that it was the apostle himself who had called them by his preaching to the grace of Christ,) "unto another Gospel." So also in chap. v, 13, "For, brethren, ye have been *called* unto liberty." Again, 1 Thess. ii, 12, "That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath CALLED you [*invited you*] to his kingdom and glory."

In our Lord's parable it will also be observed, that the persons called are not invited as separate individuals to partake of solitary blessings ; but they are called to "a feast," into a *company*, or *society*, before whom the *banquet* is spread. The full revelation of the transfer of the visible church of Christ from Jews by birth, to believers of all nations, was not, however, then made. When this branch of the evangelic system was fully revealed to the apostles,

and taught by them to others, that part of our Lord's parable which was not at first developed, was more particularly inculcated by his inspired followers. The calling of guests to the evangelical feast, we now more fully learn, was not the mere calling of men to partake of spiritual benefits; but calling them also to form a spiritual society composed of Jews and Gentiles, the believing men of all nations; to have a common fellowship in these blessings, and to be formed into this fellowship for the purpose of increasing their number, and diffusing the benefits of salvation among the people or nation to which they respectively belonged. The invitation, "the calling" of the first preachers, was to all who heard them in Rome, in Ephesus, in Corinth, in all other places; and those who embraced it, and joined themselves to the church by faith, baptism, and continued public profession, were named especially and eminently "THE CALLED;" because of their obedience to the invitation. They not only put in their claim to the blessings of Christianity individually; but became members of the new church, that spiritual society of believers which God now visibly owned as his people. As they were thus called into a common fellowship by the Gospel, this is sometimes termed their "vocation;" as the object of this church state was to promote "holiness," it is termed a "holy vocation;" as sanctity was required of the members, they are said to have been "called to be saints;" as the final result was, through the mercy of God, to be eternal life, we hear of "the hope of their calling;" and of their being "called to his eternal glory by Christ Jesus."

These views will abundantly explain the various passages in which the term "calling" occurs in the Epistles, Rom. ix, 24, "Even us whom he hath CALLED, not of the Jews only; but also of the Gentiles:" that is, whom he hath made members of his church through faith. 1 Cor. i, 24, "But unto them which are CALLED, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God;" the wisdom and efficacy of the Gospel being, of course, acknowledged in their very profession of Christ, in opposition to those to whom the preaching of "Christ crucified," was "a stumbling block," and "foolishness." 1 Cor. vii, 18, "Is any man CALLED?" (brought to acknowledge Christ, and to become a member of his church) "being circumcised, let him not become uncircumcised: is any CALLED in uncircumcision, let him not be circumcised." Eph. iv, 1-4, "That ye walk worthy of the VOCATION, wherewith ye are called. There is one *body*, and one spirit, even as ye are CALLED in one hope of your calling." 1 Thess. ii, 12, "That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath CALLED you to his



kingdom and glory." 2 Thess. ii, 13, 14, "Through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth, whereunto he CALLED you by our Gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ." 2 Tim. i, 9, 10, "Who hath saved us and CALLED us with a holy calling; not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus, before the-world began; but is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ:" on which passage we may remark, that the object of the "calling," and the "purpose," mentioned in it, must of necessity be interpreted to mean the establishment of the church on the principle of faith; and not, as formerly, on natural descent. For *personal election*, and a purpose of *effectual personal calling*, could not have been hidden till manifested by the appearing of Christ; since every instance of true conversion to God in any age prior to the appearing of Christ, would be as much a manifestation of eternal election, and an instance of personal effectual calling, according to the Calvinistic scheme, as it was after the appearance of Christ. The apostle is speaking of a purpose of God, which was kept *secret* till revealed by the Christian system; and, from various other parallel passages, we learn that this secret, this "mystery," as he often calls it, was the union of the Jews and Gentiles in "one body," or church, by faith.

In none of these passages is the doctrine of the exclusive calling of any set number of men contained; and the Synod of Dort, as though they felt this, only attempt to *reason* the doctrine from a text not yet quoted; but which we will now examine. It is Rom. viii, 30: "Whom he did predestinate, them he also *called*; and whom he *called*, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified." This is the text on which Calvinists chiefly rest their doctrine of effectual calling; and tracing it, as they say, through its steps and links, they conclude, that a set and determinate number of persons having been predestinated unto salvation, this set number only are *called effectually*, then justified, and finally glorified. The words of the Synod of Dort are, "he hath chosen a set number of certain men, neither better, nor more worthy than others; but lying in the common misery with others, to salvation in Christ, whom he had also appointed the Mediator and Head of the elect; and the foundation of salvation from all eternity; and so he decreed to give them to him to be saved; and effectually to call, and draw them to a communion with him, by his word and Spirit; or to give them a true faith in him: to justify, sanctify, and finally glorify them; having been kept in the communion of his

Son, to the demonstration of his mercy, and the praise of the riches of his glorious grace.”(2)

The text under consideration is added by the Synod, in proof of the doctrine of this article ; but it was evidently nothing to the purpose, unless it had spoken of a set and determinate number of men as predestinated and called, independent of any consideration of their faith and obedience ; which number, as being determinate, would, by consequence, exclude the rest. As these are points on which the text is at least silent, there is nothing in it unfriendly to those arguments founded on explicit texts of Holy Writ which have been already urged against this view of election ; and with this notion of election is refuted, also, the cognate doctrine of effectual calling, considered as a work of God in the heart of which the elect only can be the subjects. But the passage, having been pressed into so alien a service, deserves consideration ; and it will be found that it indeed speaks of the privileges and hopes of true believers ; but not of those privileges and hopes as secured to them by any such decree of election as the Synod has advocated. To prove this, we remark, 1. That the chapter in which the text is found, is the lofty and animating conclusion of St. Paul’s argument on justification by faith : it is a discourse of that present state of pardon and sanctity, and of that future hope of felicity, into which justification introduces believers, notwithstanding those sufferings and persecutions of the present life to which those to whom he wrote were exposed, and under which they had need of encouragement. It was, obviously, not in his design here to speak of the doctrines of election and non-election, however these doctrines may be understood. There is nothing in the course of his argument which leads to them ; and those who make use of the text in question for this purpose are obliged, therefore, to press it, by circuitous inference, into their service.

2. As the passage stands in intimate connexion with an important and elucidatory context, it ought not to be considered as insulated and complete in itself ; which has been the great source of erroneous interpretations. Under the sufferings of the present time, the apostle encourages those who had believed with the hope of glorious resurrection : this forms the subject of his consolatory remarks from verse 17 to 25. The assistance and “intercession” of the Spirit ; and the working of “all things together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his *purpose* :” clearly meaning those who, according to the Divine design, had

(2) Sententia de Divina Prædest. Art. 7. Est autem Electio immutabile Dei propositum, &c.

received and embraced the Gospel in truth, form two additional topics of consolatory suggestion. The passage under consideration immediately follows, and is in full, for the Synod has quoted it short : “ And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called (who are called) according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called ; and whom he called, them he also justified ; and whom he justified, them he also glorified.” The connexion is here manifest. “ The sufferings of the present time could only work together for the good” of them that “ love God,” by being connected with, and compensated in a future state by, a glorious resurrection from the dead ; and therefore the apostle shows that this was the design of God, the ultimate and triumphant result of the administration of his grace, that they who love God here, should be conformed to the image of his Son, in his glorified state, that he might be “ the first-born among brethren :” the head and chief of the redeemed, who shall be acknowledged as his “ brethren,” and co-heirs of his glory. Thus the whole of the 29th verse, is a reason given to show WHY “ all things, however painful in the present life, work together for good to them that love God ;” and it is therefore introduced by the connective particle, *οτι*, which has here, obviously, a causal signification, “ *for (because)* whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate.”

3. The apostle is here speaking, we grant, not of the foreknowledge or predestination of bodies of men to church privileges ; but of the experience of believers, taken distributively and personally. This will, however, be found to strengthen our argument against the use made of the latter part of the passage by the Synod of Dort.

It is affirmed of believers, that they were “ *foreknown*.” This term may be taken in the sense of fore-approved. For not only is it common with the sacred writers to express approval by the phrase “ *to know* ;” of which Hebraism the instances are many in the New Testament ; but in Rom. xi, 2, “ *to foreknow*,” is best interpreted into this meaning. “ God hath not cast away his people which he FOREKNEW.” It is not of the whole people of Israel of which the apostle here speaks, as the context shows ; but of the believing part of them, called subsequently “ the remnant according to the election of grace :” a clause which has been before explained. The question put by the apostle into the mouth of an objecting Jew, is, “ Hath God cast away his people ?” This is denied ; but the illustration taken from the reservation of seven thousand men, in the



time of Elijah, who had not bowed the knee to Baal, proves that St. Paul meant to say, that God had cast off, from being members of his church, all but the remnant; all but his people whom he "*foreknew*;" those who had laid aside the inveterate prejudices of their nation, and had entered into the new Christian church by faith. These he foreknew, that is approved; and so received them into his church. In this sense of the term foreknew, the text in question harmonizes well with the context. "All things work together for good to them that love God," &c. "For, whom he did foreknow," (approve as lovers of him,) "he predestinated to be conformed to the image of his Son," in mind and temper here, and especially in glory hereafter.

The second sense of foreknowing is that of simple prescience; and if any prefer this we shall not dispute with him, since it will come to the same issue. The foreknowledge of men must have respect either simply to their existence as persons, or as existing under some particular circumstances and characters. If persons only be the objects of this foreknowledge, then has God's prescience no more to do with the salvation of the elect, than of the non-elect, since all are equally foreknown as *persons* in a state of existence: and we might as well argue the glorification of the reprobate from God's foreknowing them, in this sense, as that of the elect. The objects of this foreknowledge, then, must be men under certain circumstances and characters; not in their simple existence as rational beings. If, therefore, the term "foreknow," in the passage above cited, "God hath not cast away his people whom he *foreknew*," be taken in the sense of prescience, those of the general mass of Jews, who were not "cast away," were foreknown under some circumstance and character which distinguished them from the others; and what this was, is made sufficiently plain from the context,—the persons foreknown, were the then believing part of the Jews, "even so then, *at this present time also*, there is a remnant according to the election of grace." Equally clear are the circumstances and character under which, more generally, the apostle represents believers as having been foreknown in the text more immediately under examination. Those "whom he did foreknow," are manifestly the believers of whom he speaks in the discourse; and who are called in chap. viii, 28, "them that love God." Under some character he must have foreknown them, or his foreknowledge of them would not be special and distinctive; it would afford no ground from which to argue any thing respecting them; it could make no difference between them and others. This specific character is given by the apostle; but it is not that which is gratuitously

assumed by the Synod of Dort a selection of them from the mass ; without respect to their faith. It is their faith itself : for of believers only is St. Paul speaking as the subjects of this foreknowledge ; and such believers too as “ love God,” and who, having actually embraced the heavenly invitation, are emphatically said to be, as before explained, “ called according to his purpose.”

To predestinate, or to determine before hand, is the next term in the text ; but here it is also to be remarked, that the persons predestinated, or before determined to be glorified with Christ, are the same persons, under the same circumstances and character, as those who are said to have been foreknown of God ; and what has been said under the former term, applies therefore, in part, to this. The subjects of predestination are the persons foreknown, and the persons foreknown, are true believers : foreknown as such, or they could not have been specially, or distinctively foreknown, according to the doctrine of the apostle. This predestination, then, is not of persons “ UNTO faith and obedience,” but of believing and obedient persons UNTO eternal glory. Nor are faith and obedience mentioned any where as the *end* of predestination, except in Eph. chap. i, where we have already proved, when treating of election, that the predestination spoken of in that chapter, is the eternal purpose of God to choose the Gentile Ephesians into his church, along with the believing Jews ; and that what is there said, is not intended of personal, but of collective election and predestination, and that to the means and ordinances of salvation. For the argument, by which this is established, let the reader, to prevent repetition, turn back.

The passage before us, then, declares, that true believers were foreknown, and predestinated to eternal glory ; and when the apostle adds, “ moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called ; and whom he called, them he also justified ; and whom he justified, them he also glorified :” he shows in particular how the Divine purpose to glorify believers is carried into effect, through all its stages. The great instrument of bringing men to “ love God” is the Gospel ; they are therefore CALLED, invited by it, to this state and benefit : the calling being obeyed, they are JUSTIFIED ; and being justified, and continuing in that state of grace, they are GLO-RIFIED. This is the plain and obvious course of the amplification pursued by the apostle ; but let us remark how many unscriptural notions the Synod of Dort engrafts upon it. First, a “ certain number” of persons, not as *believers*, but as *men*, are foreknown ; then a decree of predestination to eternal life goes forth in their favour ; but still without respect to them as believing men as the

subjects of that decree ;—then we suppose, by another decree, (for the first cannot look at qualities at all,) and by a second predestination they are to be made believers ;—then they are exclusively “called :” then infallibly justified ; and being justified, are infallibly glorified. In opposition to these notions, we have already shown, that the persons spoken of are foreknown and predestinated as believers, not as men, or persons ; and we may also oppose scriptural objections to every other part of the interpretation.

As to *calling*, we allow that all of whom the apostle speaks are necessarily “called ;” for since he is discoursing of the predestination of *believers* in Christ to eternal glory, and does not touch the question of the salvation, or otherwise, of those who have not the means of becoming such, the calling of the Gospel is necessarily supposed, as it is only upon that Divine system being proposed to their faith, that they could become *believers* in Christ. But though all such as the apostle speaks of, are “called ;” they, are not the only persons called : on the contrary, our Lord declares, that “*many* are called, but *few* chosen.” To confine the calling here spoken of to those who are actually saved, it was necessary to invent the fiction of “effectual calling,” which is made peculiar to the elect ; but calling is the invitation, and offer, and publication of the Gospel : a bringing men into a state of Christian privilege to be improved unto salvation, and not an operation in them. Effectual invitation, effectual offer, and effectual publication, are turns of the phrase which sufficiently expose the delusiveness of their comment. By effectual calling, they mean an inward compelling of the mind to embrace the outward invitation of the Gospel, and to yield to the inward solicitations of the Spirit which accompanies it ; but this, whether true or false, is a totally different thing from all that the New Testament terms “*calling*.” It is true, that some embrace the call, and others reject it, yet is there in the “calling” of the Scripture nothing exclusively appropriate to those who are finally saved ; and though the apostle supposes those whom he speaks of in the text as “called,” to have been obedient, he confines not the calling itself to them so as to exclude others,—still “*MANY* are called.” Nor is the Synod more sound in assuming that all who are called are “justified.” If “many are called, and few chosen,” this assumption is unfounded : nay, all compliances with the call, do not issue in justification ; for the man who not only heard the call, but came in to the feast, put not on the wedding garment, and was therefore finally cast out. Equally contradictory to the Scripture is it so to explain St. Paul here, as to make him say, that all who are justified, are also glorified. The justified are glorified ;



but not, as we have seen from various texts of Scriptures already, *all* who are justified. For if we have established it, that the persons who “*turn back to perdition ;*” “*make shipwreck of faith, and of a good conscience ;*” who turn out of the “*way of righteousness ;*” who forget that they were “*purged from their old sins ;*” who have “*tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come ;* and were made *partakers of the Holy Ghost,*” and were “*sanctified*” with the blood, they afterwards “*counted an unholy thing ;*” are represented by the apostles to have been in a state of grace and acceptance with God, through Christ ; then all persons justified, are not infallibly glorified ; but only such are saved as “*endure to the end ;*” and they only receive that “*crown of life,*” who are “*faithful unto death.*”

The clear reason why the apostle, having stated that true believers were foreknown and predestinated, introduces also the *order* and *method* of their salvation, was, to connect that salvation with the Gospel, and the work of Christ ; and to secure to him the glory of it. The Gospel reveals it, that those who “*love God,*” shall find that “*all things work together for their good,*” *because* (ὅτι) they are “*predestinated to be conformed to the image of the Son of God, in his glory ;* yet the Gospel did not find them *lovers of God,* but made them so. Since, therefore, none but such persons were so foreknown and predestinated to be heirs of glory, the Gospel calling was issued according to “*his purpose,*” or plan of bringing them that love him to glory, in order to produce this love in them. “*Whom*” he thus called, assuming them to be obedient to the call, he justified ; “*and whom he justified,*” assuming them to be faithful unto death, he “*glorified.*” But since the persons predestinated were contemplated as believers, not as a certain number of *persons* ; then all to whom the invitation was issued might obey that call, and all might be justified, and all glorified. In other words, all who heard the Gospel, might, through it, be brought to love God ; and might take their places among those who were “*predestinated to be conformed to the image of his Son.*” For since the predestination, as we have seen, was not of a certain number of *persons*, but of all *believers* who love God ; then, either it must be allowed, that all who were called by the Gospel, might take the character and circumstances which would bring them under the predestination mentioned by the apostle ; or else those who deny this, are bound to the conclusion, that God calls (invites) many, whom he never intends to admit to the celestial feast ; and not only so, but punishes them, with the severity of a relentless displeasure, for not obeying an invitation which he never designed them to accept, and which

they never had the power to accept. In other words, the interpretation of this passage by the Synod of Dort obliges all who follow it to admit all the consequences connected with the doctrine of reprobation, as before stated.

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## CHAPTER XXVII.

### AN EXAMINATION OF CERTAIN PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE, SUPPOSED TO LIMIT THE EXTENT OF CHRIST'S REDEMPTION.

HAVING now shown, that those passages of Holy Writ, in which the terms ELECTION, CALLING, PREDESTINATION, and FOREKNOWLEDGE occur, do not warrant those inferences, by which Calvinists attempt to restrain the signification of those declarations with respect to the extent of the benefit of Christ's death which are expressed in terms so universal in the New Testament, we may conclude our investigation of the sense of Scripture on this point, by adverting to some of those insulated texts which are most frequently adduced to support the same conclusion.

John vi, 37, "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me ; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."

It is inferred from this, and some similar passages in the Gospels, that by a transaction between the Father and the Son, a certain number of persons called "the elect," were given to Christ, and in process of time "drawn" to him by the Father ; and that as none can be saved but those thus "given" to him, and "drawn" by the Father, the doctrine of "distinguishing grace" is established ; and the rest of mankind, not having been given by the Father to the Son, can have no saving participation in the benefits of a redemption, which did not extend to them. This fiction has often been defended with much ingenuity ; but it remains a fiction still unsupported by any good interpretation of the texts which have been assumed as its foundation.

1. The first objection to the view usually taken by Calvinists of this text, is, that in the case of the perverse Jews, with whom the discourse of Christ was held, it places the reason of their not "coming" to Christ, in their not having been "given" to him by the Father ; whereas our Lord, on the contrary, places it in themselves, and shows that he considered their case to be in their own hands by his inviting them to come to him, and reproving them because they would not come. "Ye have not his word (the word of the Father) abiding in you ; for whom he hath sent. him ye be-

lieve not," John v, 38. "And ye will not come to me that ye may have life," verse 40. "How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another," verse 44. "For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me, for he wrote of me," verse 46. Now these statements cannot stand together; for if the true reason why the perverse Jews did not believe in our Lord was, that they had not been given to him of the Father, then it lay not *in themselves*; but if the reason was that "his word did not abide in them," that they "*would* not come to him;" that they sought worldly "honour;" finally, that they believed not Moses's writings; then it is altogether contradictory to these declarations, to place it in an *act of God*; to which it is not attributed in any part of the discourse.

2. To be "*given*" by the Father to Christ, is a phrase abundantly explained in the context which this class of interpreters generally overlook.

It had a special application to those pious Jews, who "waited for redemption at Jerusalem:" those who read and *believed* the writings of Moses, (a general term it would seem for the Old Testament Scriptures,) and who were thus prepared, by more spiritual views than the rest, though they were not unmixed with obscurity, to receive Christ as the Messiah. Of this description were Peter, Andrew, Philip, Nathanael, Lazarus and his sisters, and many others. Philip says to Nathanael, "We have found him of whom *Moses in the law and the prophets* did write;" and Nathanael was manifestly a pious Jew; for our Lord said of him, "Behold an *Israelite indeed*, in whom is no *guile*." The light which such honest inquirers into the meaning of the Scriptures obtained as to the import of their testimony concerning the Messiah, and the character and claims of Jesus, is expressly attributed to the teaching and revelation of "the Father." So, after Peter's confession, our Lord exclaimed, "Blessed art thou Simon Bar Jonah, for *flesh and blood* hath not revealed it unto thee; but *my Father* which is in heaven." This teaching, and its influence upon the mind is, in John vi, 44, called the "*drawing*" of the Father, "No man can come to me, except the Father *draw* him;" for, that "*to draw*," and "*to teach*," mean the same thing, is evident, since our Lord immediately adds, "it is written in the prophets, and they shall be all *taught of God*;" and then subjoins this exegetical observation:—"every man, therefore, that hath *heard*, and hath *learned of the Father*, cometh to me." Those who truly "*believed*" Moses's words, then, were under the Father's illuminating influence, "*heard and learned of the Father*;" were "*drawn*" of the Father; and so, by the Father, were "given to Christ," as his disciples, to be more



fully taught the mysteries of his religion, and to be made the saving partakers of its benefits ;—for “ this is the Father’s will which sent me, that of all which he hath given me (thus to perfect in knowledge, and to exalt into holiness) I should lose nothing ; but should raise it up again at the last day.” Thus we have exhibited that beautiful process in the work of God in the hearts of sincere Jews, which took place in their transit from one dispensation to another, from Moses to Christ. Taught of the Father ; led into the sincere belief, and general spiritual understanding of the Scriptures as to the Messiah ; when Christ appeared, they were “ drawn” and “ given” to him, as the now visible and accredited Head, Teacher, Lord, and Saviour of the church. All in this view is natural, explicit, and supported by the context ; all in the Calvinistic interpretation appears forced, obscure, and inapplicable to the whole tenor of the discourse. For to what end of edification of any kind, were the Jews told that none but a certain number, elected from eternity, and given to him before the world was by the Father, should come to him ; and that they to whom he was then speaking were not of that number ? But the coherence of the discourse is manifest, when, in these sermons of our Lord, they were told that their not coming to Christ was the proof of their unbelief in Moses’s writings ; that they were not “ taught of God ;” that they had neither “ heard nor learned of the Father,” whom they yet professed to worship, and seek ; and that, as the hinderance to their coming to Christ was in the state of their hearts, it was remediable by a diligent and honest search of the Scriptures ; and by listening to the teachings of God. To this very class of Jews our Lord, in this same discourse, says, “ Search the Scriptures ;” but to what end were they to do this, if, in the Calvinistic sense, they were not given to him of the Father ? The text in question, then, thus opened by a reference to the whole discourse, is of obvious meaning. “ All that the Father giveth me after this preparing teaching, shall or *will* come to me ; (for it is simply the future tense of the indicative mood which is used ; and no notion of irresistible influence is conveyed ;) and him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out.” The latter clause is added to show the perfect harmony of design between Christ and the Father, a point often adverted to in this discourse : for “ I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.” Whom, therefore, the Father so gives, I receive : I enter upon my assigned office, and shall be faithful to it. In reference also to the work of God in the hearts of men in general, as well as to the honest and inquiring Jews of our Lord’s day, these passages have a clear and interesting application. The work

of the Father is carried on by his convincing and teaching Spirit ; but that Spirit “testifies” of Christ, “leads” to Christ, and “gives” to Christ, that we may receive the full benefit of his sacrifice and salvation, and be placed in the church of which he is the Head. But in this there is no exclusion. That which hinders others from coming to Christ, is that which hinders them from being “drawn” of the Father ; from “hearing and learning” of the Father, in his holy word, and by his Spirit ; which hindrance is the moral state of the heart, not any exclusive decree ; not the want of teaching, or drawing ; but, as it is compendiously expressed in Scripture, a “RESISTING of the Holy Ghost.”

Matt. xx, 15, 16, “Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with my own ? Is thine eye evil because I am good ? So the last shall be first, and the first last ; for many are called but few chosen.”

This passage has been often urged in proof of the doctrine of unconditional election ; and the argument raised upon it is, that God has a right to dispense grace and glory to whom he will, on a principle of pure sovereignty ; and to leave others to perish in their sins. That the passage has no relation to this doctrine, needs no other proof than that it is the conclusion of the parable of the labourers in the vineyard. The householder giveth to them that “wrought but one hour” an equal reward to that bestowed upon those who had laboured through the twelve. The latter received the full price of the day’s labour agreed upon ; and the former were made subjects of a special and sovereign dispensation of grace. The exercise of the Divine sovereignty, in bestowing *degrees* of grace, or reward, is the subject of the parable, and no one disputes it ; but, according to the Calvinistic interpretation, no grace at all, no reward, is bestowed upon the non-elect, who are, moreover, punished for rejecting a grace never offered. The absurdity of such a use of the parable is obvious. It relates to no such subject ; for its *moral* manifestly relates to the reception of great offenders, and especially of the Gentiles, into the favour of Christ, and the abundant rewards of Heaven.

2 Timothy ii, 19, “Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his ; and, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.”

The apostle, in this chapter, is speaking of those ancient heretics who affirmed “that the resurrection is past already, and overthrew the faith of some.” What then ? the truth itself is not overthrown ; the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, or inscription, “The Lord knoweth,” or approveth, or, if it please better, distinguishes and acknowledges “them that are his ;” and, “Let every

one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity ;” which is as much as to say that none are truly “the Lord’s” who do not depart from iniquity ; and that those whose faith is “overthrown” by the influence of corrupt principles and manners, are no longer accounted “his :” all which is perfectly congruous with the opinions of those who hold the unrestricted extent of the death of Christ. Towards the Calvinistic doctrine, this text certainly bears no friendly aspect ; for surely it was of little consequence to any, to have their “faith overthrown,” if that faith never was, nor could be, connected with salvation.

John x, 26, “But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you.”

The argument here is, that the cause of the unbelief of the persons addressed was, that they were not of the number given to Christ by the Father, from eternity, to the exclusion of all others. (30) Let it, however, be observed, that in direct opposition to this, men are called the sheep of Christ by our Lord himself, not with reference to any supposed transaction between the Father and the Son in eternity, which is never even hinted at, but because of their *qualities* and *acts*. “My sheep *hear* my voice, and I know them ; and they follow me.” “A stranger will they not *follow*.” Why then did not the Jews believe ? Because they had not the qualities of Christ’s sheep : they were neither discriminating as to the voice of the shepherd, nor obedient to it. The usual Calvinistic interpretation brings in our Lord, in this instance, as teaching the Jews that the reason why they did not believe on him, was, that they *could* not believe ! for, as Mr. Scott says in the note below, “not being of that chosen remnant, they were left to the pride and enmity of their carnal hearts.” This was not likely to be very edifying to them. But the words of our Lord are manifestly words of reproof, grounded, not upon acts of God, but upon acts of their own ; and they are parallel to the passages—“If God were your Father, ye would love me,” chap. viii, 42. “Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice,” xviii, 37. “How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another,” v, 44.

John xiii, 18, “I speak not of you all : I know whom I have chosen : but that the Scripture may be fulfilled, He that cateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me.”

“He perfectly knew,” says Mr. Scott on the passage, “what

(3) “The true reason why they did not believe was, the want of that simple, teachable, and inoffensive temper, which characterized his sheep, FOR not being of that CHOSEN remnant, they were left to the pride and enmity of their carnal hearts.”—SCOTT’S Com.



persons he had chosen, as well as which of them were chosen unto salvation." This is surely making our Lord utter a very unmeaning truism; for as he chose the apostles, so he must have "*known*" that he chose them. Dr. Whitby's interpretation is, therefore, to be taken in preference. "I know the temper and disposition of those whom I have chosen, and what I may expect from every one of them; for which case I said, 'Ye are not all clean;' but God in his wisdom hath permitted this, that as Ahithophel betrayed David, though he was his familiar friend, so Judas, my familiar at my table, might betray the Son of God; and so the words recorded, Psalms xli, 9, might be fulfilled in him also of whom king David was the type." (4) Certainly Judas was "chosen" as well as the rest. "Have not I *chosen* you *twelve*, and one of you is a devil?" nor have we any reason to conclude that Christ uses the term chosen differently in the two passages. When, therefore, our Lord says, "I know whom I have chosen," the term *know* must be taken in the sense of discriminating character.

John xv, 16, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit." Mr. Scott, whom, as being a modern Calvinistic commentator, we rather choose again to quote, interprets—"chosen them unto salvation." In its proper sense, we make no objection to this phrase: it is a scriptural one; but it must be taken in its own connexion. Here, however, either the term "chosen" is to be understood with reference to the apostolic *office*, which is very agreeable to the context; or if it relate to the salvation of the disciples, it can have no respect to the doctrine of *eternal* election. For if the election spoken of were not an act done *in time*, it would have been unnecessary for our Lord, to say "Ye have not *chosen me*;" because it is obvious they could not choose him before they came into being. Another passage also, in the same discourse, farther proves, that the election mentioned was an act done in time. "I have *chosen you out of the world*," ver. 19. But if they were "chosen out of the world," they were chosen subsequently to their being "in the world;" and, therefore, the election spoken of is not eternal. The last observation will also deprive these interpreters of another favourite passage, "Those that thou *gavest* me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition." The "giving" here mentioned, was no more an act of God in eternity, as they pretend, than the "choosing" to which we have already referred; for in the same discourse the apostles are called "the men thou *gavest* me *out of the world*," and were therefore given to Christ *in time*. The exception

as to Judas, also, proves that this “*giving*” expresses actual discipleship. Judas had been “*given*” as well as the rest, or he could not have been mentioned as an exception; that is, he had been once “*found*,” or he could not have been “*lost*.” 2 Tim. i, 9, “Who hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.”

Mr. Scott here contends for the doctrine of the *personal election* of the persons spoken of, “from the beginning, or before eternal ages,” which is the most literal translation; and argues that this cannot be denied, without supposing “that all who live and die impenitent, may be said to be saved, and called with a holy calling; because a Saviour was promised from the beginning of the world.” “Indeed,” he adds, “the purpose of God is mentioned as the *reason* why they, rather than others, were saved and called.” We shall see the passage in a very different light, if we attend to the following considerations.

“The purpose and grace,” or gracious purpose, “which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began,” is represented as having been “*hid* in past ages;” for the apostle immediately adds, “but is *now* made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ.” It cannot be the personal election of believers, therefore, of which the apostle here speaks; because it was saying nothing to declare that the Divine purpose to elect them was not manifest in former ages; but was reserved to the appearing of Christ. Whatever degree of manifestation God’s purpose of personal election as to individuals receives, even the Calvinists acknowledge that it is made obvious only by the personal moral changes which take place in them through their “effectual calling,” faith, and regeneration. Till the individual, therefore, comes into being, God’s purpose to elect him cannot be manifested; and those who were so selected, but did not live till Christ appeared, could not have their election manifested before he appeared. Again, if personal election be intended in the text, and calling and conversion are the proofs of personal election, then it is not true that the election of individuals to eternal life, was kept hid until the appearing of Christ; for every true conversion, in any former age, was as much a manifestation of personal election, that is of the peculiar favour and “distinguishing grace” of God, as it is under the Gospel. A parallel passage in the Epistle to the Ephesians, chap. iii, 4–6, will, however, explain that before us. “Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ, which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is *now* revealed unto the holy apostles

and prophets by the Spirit; that *the Gentiles should be fellow heirs*, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the Gospel:" and in ver. 11, this is called, in exact conformity to the phrase used in the Epistle to Timothy, "*the eternal purpose* which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." The "purpose," or "gracious purpose," mentioned in both places, as formerly hidden, but "*now manifested*," was therefore the purpose to form one universal church of believing Jews and Gentiles; and in the text before us, the apostle, speaking in the name of all his fellow Christians, whether Jews or Gentiles, says that they were saved and called according to that previous purpose and plan—"who hath saved *us* and called *us*," &c. The reason why the apostle Paul so often refers to "this eternal purpose" of God, is to justify and confirm his own ministry as a teacher of the Gentiles, and an assertor of their equal spiritual rights with the Jews; and that this subject was present to his mind when he wrote this passage, and not an eternal personal election, is manifest from verse 11, which is a part of the same paragraph, "whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the *Gentiles*."

But, says Mr. Scott, "all who live and die impenitent, may then be said to be 'saved, and called with a holy calling,' because a Saviour was promised from the beginning of the world." But we do not say that any are saved only because a Saviour was promised from the beginning of the world; but that the apostle simply affirms that the salvation of believers, whether Gentiles or Jews, and the means of that salvation, were the consequences of God's previous purpose, before the world began. All who are actually saved, may say, "We are saved" according to this purpose; but if their actual salvation shut out the salvation of all others, then no more have been saved than those included by the apostle in the pronoun "*us*," which would prove too much. But Mr. Scott tells us that "the purpose of God" is mentioned as the *reason* why they, rather than others, were thus saved and called." It is mentioned with no such view. The purpose of God is introduced by the apostle as his authority for making to "the Gentiles" the offer of salvation; and as a motive to induce Timothy to prosecute the same glorious work, after his decease. This is obviously the scope of the whole chapter.

Acts xiii, 48, "And as many as were *ordained* to eternal life believed." Mr. Scott is somewhat less confident than some others as to the support which the Calvinistic system is thought to derive from the word rendered *ordained*. He, however, attempts to leave the impression upon the minds of his readers, that it means. "*appointed to eternal life*."



We may, however, observe,

1. That the persons here spoken of were the Gentiles to whom the apostles preached the Gospel, upon the Jews of the same place "putting it from them," and "judging" or proving "themselves unworthy of eternal life." But if the only reason why the Gentiles believed was, that they were "ordained," in the sense of personal predestination, to eternal life ;" then the reason why the Jews believed not was the want of such a predestinating act of God, and not, as it is affirmed, an act of their own—the PUTTING IT AWAY from them.

2. This interpretation supposes that all the *elect* Gentiles at Antioch believed at that time ; and that no more, at least of full age, remained to believe. This is rather difficult to admit; and therefore Mr. Scott says, "though it is probable that all who were thus affected at first, did not at that time believe unto salvation ; yet many did." But this is not according to the text, which says expressly, "*as many* as were ordained to eternal life believed : " so that such commentators must take this inconvenient circumstance along with their interpretation, that all the elect at Antioch were, at that moment, brought into Christ's church.

3. Even some Calvinists, not thinking that it is the practice of the apostles and evangelists to lift up the veil of the decrees so high as this interpretation supposes, choose to render the words—"as many as were *determined*," or "*ordered*" for eternal life.

4. But we may finally observe, that, in no place in the New Testament, in which the same word occurs, is it ever employed to convey the meaning of destiny, or predestination : a consideration which is fatal to the argument which has been drawn from it. The following are the only instances of its occurrence : Matt. xxviii, 16, "Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had *appointed* them." Here the word means *commanded*, or at most *agreed upon* beforehand, and certainly conveys no idea of destiny. Luke vii, 8, "For I also am a man *set* under authority." Here the word means "*placed*, or *disposed*." Acts xv, 2, "They *determined* that Paul and Barnabas should go up to Jerusalem." Here it signifies mutual agreement and decision. Acts xxii, 10, "Arise, and go into Damascus ; and there it shall be told thee of all things which are *appointed* for thee to do." Here it means committed to, or appointed in the way of injunction ; but no idea of *destiny* is conveyed. Acts xxviii, 23, "And when they had *appointed* him a day," when they had fixed upon a day by mutual agreement ; for St. Paul was not under the command or control of the visitors who came to him to hear his doctrine. Rom.

xiii, 1, "The powers that be are *ordained* of God:" clearly signifying constituted and ordered. 1 Cor. xvi, 15, "They have *addicted* themselves to the ministry of the saints:" here it can mean nothing else than applied, devoted themselves to. Thus the word never takes the sense of predestination; but, on the contrary, when St. Luke wishes to convey that notion, he combines it with a preposition, and uses a compound verb—"and hath determined the times *before appointed*." This was *pre-ordination*, and he therefore so terms it; but in the text in question he speaks not of pre-ordination, but of *ordination* simply. The word employed signifies, "to place, order, appoint, dispose, determine," and is very variously applied. The prevalent idea is that of settling, ordering, and resolving; and the meaning of the text is, that as many as were fixed and resolved upon eternal life, as many as were careful about, and determined on salvation, believed. For that the historian is speaking of the candid and serious part of the hearers of the apostles, in opposition to the blaspheming Jews; that is, of those Gentiles "who, when they heard this, were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord," is evident from the context. The persons who then believed, appear to have been under a previous preparation for receiving the Gospel; and were probably religious proselytes associating with the Jews.

Luke x, 20, "But rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven." The inference from this text is, that there is a register of all the elect in the "book of life," and that their number, according to the doctrine of the Synod of Dort, is fixed and determinate. Our Calvinistic friends forget, however, that names may be "blotted out of the book of life:" and so the theory falls.—"And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall *take away* his part out of the book of life."

Prov. xvi, 4, "The Lord hath made all things for himself; yea, even the wicked for the day of evil." If there be any relevance in this passage to the Calvinistic theory, it must be taken in the supralapsarian sense, that the final cause of the creation of the wicked is their eternal punishment. It follows from this, that sin is not the cause of punishment; but that this flows from the mere will of God; which is a sufficient refutation. The persons spoken of are "wicked." Either they were made wicked by themselves, or by God. If not by God, then to make the wicked for the day of evil, can only mean that he renders them who have made themselves wicked, and remain incorrigibly so, the instruments of glorifying his justice, "in the day of evil," that is, in the day of punishment. The Hebrew phrase, rendered literally, is, "the Lord *doth work* all

things for himself;" which applies as well to acts of government as to acts of creation. Thus, then, we are taught by the passage, not that God *created* the wicked to punish them, but so governs, controls, and subjects all things to himself; and so orders them for the accomplishment of his purpose, that the wicked shall not escape his just displeasure; since upon such men the day of evil will ultimately come. It is therefore added in the next verse, "Though hand join in hand, he shall not be unpunished," (5)

John xii, 37-40, "But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him; that the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them."

Mr. Scott's interpretation is, in its first aspect, more moderate than that of many divines of the same school. It is—"they had long shut their own eyes, and hardened their own hearts; and so God would give up many of them to such *judicial* blindness, as rendered their conversion and salvation impossible. The prophecy was not the *motive* or *cause* of their wickedness; but it was the declaration of God's *purpose* which could not be defeated: therefore whilst this prophecy stood in Scripture against them, and others of like character, who hated the truth from the love of sin, the event became certain; in which sense it is said, that they *could not* believe."

That, in some special and aggravated cases, and especially in that which consisted in ascribing the miracles of Christ to Satan, and thus blaspheming the Holy Ghost; (cases, however, which probably affected but a few individuals, and those principally the chief Pharisees and Rabbis of our Lord's time;) there was such a judicial dereliction as Mr. Scott speaks of, is allowed; but that it extended to the body of the Jews, who at that time did not believe in the mission and miracles of Christ, may be denied. The contrary must appear from the earnest manner in which their salvation was sought by Christ and his apostles, subsequently to this declaration; and also from the *fact* of great numbers of this same people being afterwards brought to acknowledge and embrace Christ and his religion. This is our objection to the former part of this interpreta-

(5) HOLDEN translates the verse, "Jehovah hath made all things for himself; yea, even the wicked he daily sustains;" and observes, "should the received translation be deemed correct, 'the day of evil' would be considered, by a Jew of the age of Solomon, to mean, the day of trouble and affliction."



tion. Not every one who is lost finally, is given up previously to judicial blindness. To be thus abandoned *before death* is a special procedure, which our Lord himself confines to the special case of blasphemy against the Holy Ghost. To the latter part of the comment, the objection is still stronger. Mr. Scott acknowledges the wicked and wilful blindness of these Jews to be the *cause* of the judicial dereliction supposed. From this it would naturally follow, that this wilful blinding, and hardening of their hearts, was the true reason why they "*could not believe*," as provoking God to take away his Holy Spirit from them. But Mr. Scott cannot stop here. He will have another cause for their incapacity to believe: not, indeed, the prophecy quoted from Isaiah by the evangelist; but "*God's purpose*," of which that prediction, he says, was the "*declaration*." It follows, then, that "*they could not believe*," because it was "*God's purpose which could not be defeated*." Agreeably to this Mr. Scott understands the prediction as asserting, that the agent in blinding the eyes of the people reprov'd, that is the obstinate Jews, was God himself.

Let us now, therefore, more particularly examine this passage, and we shall find,

1. That it affirms, not that their eyes should be blinded, or their ears closed by a Divine agency, as assumed by Mr. Scott and other Calvinists. This notion is not found in Isaiah vi, from which the quotation is made. There the agent is represented to be the prophet himself. "Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes," &c. Now as the prophet could exert no secret direct influence over the minds of the disobedient Jews, he must have fulfilled this commission, if it be taken literally, by preaching to them a fallacious and obdurate doctrine, like that of the false prophets; but if, as we know, he preached no such doctrine, then are the words to be understood according to the genius of the Hebrew language, which often represents him as an agent, who is the occasion, however innocent and undesigned, of any thing being done by another. Thus the prophet, in consequence of the unbelief of the Jews of his day in those promises of Messiah he was appointed to deliver, and which led him to complain, "Who hath believed our report?" became an occasion to the Jews of "making their own hearts fat, and their ears heavy, and of shutting their eyes" against his testimony. The true agents were, however, the Jews themselves; and by all who knew the genius of the Hebrew language, they would be understood as so charged by the prophet. Thus the Septuagint, the Arabic, and the Syriac versions all agree in rendering the text,

so that the people themselves, to whom the prophet wrote, are made the agents of doing that which, in the style of the Hebrews, is ascribed to the prophet himself. So also, it is manifest, that St. Paul, who quotes the same Scripture, Acts xxviii, 25-27, understood the prophet; "Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers, saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive: for the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and *their eyes* HAVE THEY closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them." Nor in the passage as it is given by St. John, is the blinding of the eyes of the Jews attributed to God. It stands, it is true, in our version, "*He* hath blinded thpir eyes," &c. But the Greek verbs have no nominative case expressed, and it is left to be supplied by the reader. Nor does the context mention the agent; and farther, if we supply the pronoun *He*, we cannot refer it to God, since the passage closes with a change of person, "and *I* should heal them." The agent blinding and hardening, and the agent attempting to "heal," cannot, therefore, be the same, because they are opposed to each other, not only grammatically, but in design and operation. That agent, then, may be "the God of this world," to whom the work of blinding them that believe not, is expressly attributed by the apostle Paul; or St. John, familiar with the Hebrew style, might refer it to the prophet, who consequentially, and through the wilful perverseness of the Jews, was the occasion of their making their own "hearts gross, and closing their ears;" or, finally, the personal verb may be used impersonally, and the active form for the passive, of which critics furnish parallel instances. (6) But in all these views the true responsible agent and criminal doer is "THIS PEOPLE,"—this perverse and obstinate people themselves; a point to which every part of their Scriptures gives abundant testimony.

2. It may be denied that the prophecy of Isaiah here quoted is, as Mr. Scott represents it, "a declaration of God's *purpose*, which could not be defeated." A simple prophecy is not a declaration of purpose at all; but the declaration of a future event. If a purpose of God, to be hereafter accomplished, be declared, this declaration becomes more than a simple prophecy; it connects the act with an agent; and in the case before us, that agent is assumed to be God. But we have shown, that the agent in blinding the eyes, and closing the ears of these perverse Jews, is no where said

(6) See WHITBY'S Paraphrase and Annot. and his Dis. on the Five Points, ch. i.

to be God ; and therefore the prophecy is not a declaration of his purpose. Again, if it were a declaration of God's purpose, it would not follow that it could not be defeated : for prophetic threatenings are not absolute ; but imply conditions. This is so far from being a mere assumption, that it is established by the authority of Almighty God himself, who declares, Jer. xviii, 7, 8, " At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it ; if that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them." Here we have a prophetic commination *uttered* ; " at what instant I *speak*"—"that nation against whom I have *pronounced*." We have also the *purpose* in the mind of God—"the evil that I *thought* ;" and yet this prediction might fail, and this purpose be defeated. So in the case of repentant Nineveh, the predicted destruction failed, and the wrathful purpose was defeated, without any impeachment of the Divine attributes : on the contrary, they were illustrated by this manifestation of the mingled justice and grace of his administration. Mr. Scott, like many others, argues as though the prediction of an event gave certainty to it. But the certainty or uncertainty of events is not created by prophecy. Prophecy results from prescience ; and prescience has respect to what will be, but not necessarily to what *must* be. Of this, however, more in its proper place.

3. If this prophecy could be made to bear all that the Calvinists impose upon it, it would not serve their purpose. It would, even then, afford no proof of *general* election and reprobation, since it has an exclusive application to the unbelieving part of the Jewish people only ; and is never adduced, either by St. John or by St. Paul, as the ground of any general doctrine whatever.

Jude 4, "For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men," &c.

The word which is here rendered ordained, is literally *fore-written* ; and the word rendered condemnation, signifies legal *punishment*, or *judgment*. The passage means, therefore, either that the class of men spoken of had been *foretold* in the Scriptures, or that their punishment had been there formerly typified, in those examples of ancient times of which several are cited in the following verses ; as Cain, Balaam, Korah, and the cities of the plain. Mr. Scott, therefore, very well interprets the text, when he says, "the Lord had foreseen them, for they were of old, *registered* to this condemnation : many *predictions* had, from the beginning, been delivered to this effect." But when he adds, "Nay, these predictions had been *extracts*, as it were, from the registers of Heaven ; even the *secret*



and *eternal* decrees of God, in which he had determined to leave them to their pride and lusts, till they merited and received this condemnation," we may well ask for the proof. All this is manifestly gratuitous; brought to the text, and not deduced from it; and is, therefore, very unworthy of a commentator. The "extracts" from the register of God's decrees, as they are found in the Scriptures, contain no such sentiment as that these abusers of the grace of God, only did that which they could not but do, in consequence of having been "left to their pride and lusts;" and excluded before they were born from the mercies of Christ. If this sentiment then is not in the "extracts," it is not in the original register; or else something is there which God, in his own revealed word, has not extracted, and respecting which the commentator must either have had some independent revelation, or have been guilty of speaking very rashly. On the contrary, in the parallel passage in 2 Peter ii, 1-3, where the same class of persons is certainly spoken of, so far are they from being represented as excluded from the benefits of Christ's redemption, that they are charged with a specific crime, which necessarily implies their participation in it, with the crime of "denying the Lord that BOUGHT them."

1 Cor. iv, 7, "For who maketh thee to differ from another?"

The context shows that the apostle was here endeavouring to repress that ostentation which had arisen among many persons in the church of Corinth, on account of their spiritual gifts and endowments. This he does by referring those gifts to God, as the sole giver,—“for who maketh thee to *differ*?” or who confers *superiority* upon thee? as the sense obviously is; “and what hast thou that thou didst not receive?” Mr. Scott acknowledges that “the apostle is here speaking more immediately of natural abilities, and spiritual gifts; and not of special and efficacious grace.” If so, then the passage has nothing to do with this controversy. The argument he however affirms, concludes equally in one case, as in the other; and in his sermon on election, he thus applies it: “Let the blessings of the Gospel be fairly proposed, with solemn warnings and pressing invitations, to two men of exactly the same character and disposition: if they are left to themselves in entirely similar circumstances, the effect must be precisely the same. But, behold, while one proudly scorns and resents the gracious offer, the other trembles, weeps, prays, repents, believes! Who maketh this man to differ from the other? or what hath he that he hath not received? The scriptural answer to this question, when properly understood, decides the whole controversy.”(7)

(7) CALVIN puts the matter in much the same way. Inst. Lib. iii, c. 24

As this is a favourite argument, and a popular dilemma in the hands of the Calvinists, and so much is supposed to depend upon its solution, we may somewhat particularly examine it.

Instead of supposing the case of two men "of exactly the same character and disposition," why not suppose the same man in two moral states? for one man who "proudly scorns the Gospel" does not more differ from another who penitently receives it, than the same man who has once scoffingly rejected, and afterwards meekly submitted to it, differs from himself; as for instance, Saul the Pharisee from Paul the Apostle. Now to account for the case of two men, one receiving the Gospel, and the other rejecting it, the theory of election is brought in; but in the case of the one man in two different states, this theory cannot be resorted to. The man was elect from eternity; he is no outcast from the mercy of his God, and the redemption of his Saviour, and yet, in one period of his life, he proudly scorns the offered mercy of Christ, at another he accepts it. It is clear, then, that the doctrine of election, simply considered in itself, will not solve the latter case; and by consequence it will not solve the former: for the mere fact, that one man rejects the Gospel whilst another receives it, is no more a proof of the non-election of the non-recipient, than the fact of a man now rejecting it, who shall afterwards receive it, is a proof of his non-election. The solution, then, must be sought for in some communication of the grace of God, in some inward operation upon the heart, which is supposed to be a consequence of election; but this leads to another and distinct question. This question is not, however, the vincibility or invincibility of the grace of God, at least not in the first instance. It is, in truth, whether there is any operation of the grace of God in man at all tending to salvation, in cases where we see the Gospel rejected. Is the man who rejects perseveringly, and he who rejects but for a time, perhaps a long period of his life, left without any good motions or assisting influence from the grace of God, or not? This question seems to admit of but one of three answers. Either he has no gracious assistance at all, to dispose him to receive the Gospel; or he has a sufficient influence of grace so to dispose him; or that gracious influence is dispensed in an insufficient measure. If the first answer be given, then not only are the non-elect left without any visitations of grace throughout life: but the elect also are left without them, until the moment of their effectual calling. If the second be offered as the answer, then both in the case of the non-elect man who finally rejects Christ, and that of the elect man, who rejects him for a great part of his life, the *saving* grace of God must be allowed so to work as

to be capable of counteraction, and effectual resistance. If this be denied, then the third answer must be adopted, and the grace of God must be allowed so to influence as to be designedly insufficient for the ends for which it is given ; that is, it is given for no saving end at all, either as to the non-elect, or as to the elect all the time they remain in a state of actual alienation from Christ. For if an insufficient degree of grace is bestowed, when a sufficient degree might have been imparted, then there must have been a reason for restraining the degree of grace to an insufficient measure ; which reason could only be, that it might be insufficient, and therefore not saving. Now, two of the three of these positions are manifestly contrary to the word of God. To say that no gracious influence of the Holy Spirit operates upon the unconverted, is to take away their guilt ; since they cannot be guilty of rejecting the Gospel if they have no power to embrace it, either from themselves, or by impartation, whilst yet the Scripture represents this as the highest guilt of men. All the exhortations, and reproofs, and invitations of Scripture, are, also, by this doctrine, turned into mockery and delusion ; and, finally, there can be no such thing in this case, as “resisting the Holy Ghost ;” as “grieving and quenching the Spirit ;” as “doing despite to the Spirit of grace,” either in the case of the non-elect, who are never converted, or of the elect, before conversion : so that the latter have never been guilty of stubbornness, and obstinacy, and rebellion, and resistance of grace ; though these are, by them, afterwards, always acknowledged among their sins. Nor did they ever feel any good motion, or drawing from the Spirit of God, before what they term their effectual calling ; though, it is presumed, that few, if any of them, will deny this in fact.

If the doctrine that no grace is imparted before conversion is then contradicted both by Scripture and experience, how will the case stand, as to the intentional restriction of that grace to a degree which is insufficient to dispose the subject to the acceptance of the Gospel ? If this view be held, it must be maintained equally as to the elect before their conversion, and as to the non-elect. In that case, then, we have equal difficulty in accounting for the guilt of man, as when it is supposed that no grace at all is imparted ; and for the reproofs, calls, and invitations, and threatenings of the word of God. For where lies the difference between the absolute non-impartation of grace, and grace so imparted as to be designedly insufficient for salvation ? Plainly there is none, except that we can see no end at all for giving insufficient grace ; a circumstance which would only serve to render still more perplexing the principles and practice of the Divine administration. It has no end of mercy, and



none of justice ; nor, as far as can be perceived, of wisdom. Not of *mercy*, for it effects nothing merciful, and designs not to effect it ; not of *justice*, for it places no man under equitable responsibility ; not of *wisdom*, for it has no assignable *end*. The Scripture treats all men to whom the Gospel is preached as endowed with power, not indeed from themselves, but from the grace of God, to “turn at his reproof ;” to come at his “call ;” to embrace his “grace ;” but they have no capacity for any of these acts, if either of these opinions be true : and thus the word of God is contradicted. So also is experience, in both cases ; for there could be no sense of guilt for having rejected Christ, and grieved the Holy Spirit, either in the non-elect never converted, or in the elect before conversion, if either they had no visitations of grace at all ; or if these were designedly granted in an insufficient degree.

It follows, then, that the doctrine of the impartation of grace to the unconverted, in a sufficient degree to enable them to embrace the Gospel, must be admitted ; and with this doctrine comes in that of a power in man to use, or to spurn this heavenly gift and gracious assistance : in other words, a power of willing to come to Christ, even when men do not come ; a power of considering their ways, and turning to the Lord, when they do not consider them and turn to him ; a power of praying, when they do not pray ; and a power of believing, when they do not believe : powers all of grace ; all the results of the work of the Spirit in the heart ; but powers to be exerted by man, since it is man, and not God, who wills, and turns, and prays, and believes, whilst the influence under which this is done is from the grace of God alone. This is the doctrine which is clearly contained in the words of St. Paul, “Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling ; for it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do, of his own good pleasure ;” where, not only the operation of God, but the co-operation of man, are distinctly marked ; and are both held up as necessary to the production of the grand result—“salvation.”

It will appear, then, from these observations, that the question, “Who maketh thee to differ ?” as urged by Mr. Scott and others from the time of Calvin, is a very inapposite one to their purpose, for,

First, it is a question which the apostle asks with no reference to a difference in religious state, but only with respect to gifts and endowments. Secondly, the Holy Ghost gives no authority for such an application of his words as is thus made, in any other part of Scripture. Thirdly, it cannot be employed for the purpose for which it is dragged forth so often from its context and meaning ; for, in the use thus made of it, it is falsely assumed, that the two

men instanced, the one who rejects, and the other who embraces the Gospel, are not each endowed with sufficient grace to enable them to receive God's gracious offer. Now this, we may again say, must either be denied or affirmed. If it be affirmed, then the difference between the two men consists, not where they place it, in the destitution or deficiency on the one hand, or in the plenitude on the other, of the grace of GOD : but in the *use* of grace : and when they say, "it is God which maketh them to differ," they say in fact, that it is God that not only gives sufficient grace to each ; but *uses* that grace for them. For if it be allowed that a sufficient grace for repentance and faith is given to each, then the true difference between them is, that one repents, and the other does not repent ; the one believes, and the other does not believe : if, therefore, this difference is to be attributed to God directly, then the *act* of repenting, and the *act* of believing, are both the acts of GOD. If they hesitate to avow this, for it is an absurdity, then either they must give up the question as totally useless to them, or else take the other side of the alternative, that to all who reject the Gospel, sufficient grace to receive it is not given. How then will that serve them ? They may say, it is true, when they take the man who embraces the Gospel, "Who maketh him to differ but God, who gives this sufficient grace to him ?" but then we have an equal right to take the man who rejects the Gospel, and ask, "Who maketh him to differ" from the man that embraces it ? To this they cannot reply that he maketh *himself* to differ ; for that which they here lay down is, that he has either no grace at all imparted to him to enable him to act as the other ; or, what amounts to the same thing, no sufficient degree of it to produce a true faith ; that he never had that grace ; that he is, and always must remain, as destitute of it as when he was born. He does not, therefore, *make himself* to differ from the man who embraces the Gospel ; for he has no power to imitate his example, and to make himself equal with him ; and the only answer to our question is, "that it is God who maketh him to differ from the other," by withholding that grace by which alone he could be prevented from rejecting the Gospel ; and this, so far from "settling the whole controversy," is the very point in debate.

This dilemma, then, will prove, when examined, but inconvenient to themselves ; for if sufficiency of grace be allowed to the unconverted, then the Calvinists make the *acts* of grace, as well as the gift of grace itself, to be the work of God in the elect : if sufficiency of grace is denied, then the unbelief and condemnation of the wicked are not from themselves, but from God. (8) The fact is,

(8) This CALVIN scruples not to say, "The supreme Lord, therefore, by *de-*  
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that this supposed puzzle has been always used *ad captandum*; and is unworthy so grave a controversy; and as to the pretence, that the admission of a power in man to use or to abuse the grace of God involves some merit or ground of glorying in man himself, this is equally fallacious. The power "to will and to do," is the sole result of the working of God in man. All is of grace: "By the grace of God," must every one say, "I am what I am." Here is no dispute; every good thought, desire, and tendency of the heart, and all its power to turn these to practical account by prayer, by faith, by the use of the means of grace, through which new power "to will and to do," new power to use grace, as well as new grace, is communicated, is of God. Every good act, therefore, is the use of a communicated power which is given of grace, as the stretching out of the withered hand of the healed man was the use of the power communicated to his imbecility, and still *working with the act*, though not the act itself; and to attempt to lay a ground of boasting and self-sufficiency in the *assisted* acceptance of the grace of God by us; and the *empowered* submission of our hearts to it, is as manifestly absurd as it would be to say, that the man, whose arm was withered, had great reason to congratulate himself on his share in the glory of the miracle, because he himself stretched out the invigorated member at the command of Christ; and because it was not, in fact, lifted up by the hand of him who, in that act of faith and obedience, had healed him.

The question of the invincibility of Divine grace, is a point to be in another place considered.

Acts xviii, 9, 10, "Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace; for I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee; for *I have much people in this city.*"

Mr. Scott, to whom the doctrine of election is always present, says, "in this Christ *evidently* spake of those who were *his* by election, the gift of the Father, and his own purchase; though, at that time, in an unconverted state." (9) It would have been more "evident" had this been *said* by the writer of the Acts as well as by Mr. Scott, or any thing approaching to it. The "evidence," we fear, was all in Mr. Scott's predisposition of mind; for it no where else appears. The expression is, at least, capable of two very satisfactory interpretations, independent of the theory of Calvinistic election. It may mean, that there were many well disposed and serious inquirers among the "Greeks" in Corinth; for when Paul turned *priving* of the communication of his light, and leaving in darkness those whom he has reprobated, makes way for the accomplishment of his own predestination." Inst. Lib. iii, c. 24.

(9) Notes in loc.



from the Jews, he “entered into the house of Justus, one *that worshipped God*. This man was a Greek proselyte ; and, from various parts of the Acts of the Apostles it is plain, that this class of people were not only numerous, but generally received the Gospel with joy, and were among the first who joined the primitive churches. They manifested their readiness to receive the Gospel in Corinth itself when the Jews “opposed and blasphemed ;” and it is not improbable, that to such proselytes, who were in many places, “a people prepared of the Lord,” reference is made, when our Saviour, speaking to Paul in this vision, says “I have much people in this city.” Suppose, however, he speaks prospectively and prophetically, making his foreknowledge of an event the means of encouraging the labours of his devoted apostle, the doctrine of election follows neither from the fact of the foreknowledge of God, nor from prophetic declarations grounded upon it. Even Calvin founds not election upon God’s foreknowledge ; but upon his decree.

A few other passages might be added, which are sometimes adduced as proofs of the Calvinistic theory of “election” and “distinguishing grace ;” but they are all either explained by that view of scriptural election which has been at large adduced, or are of very obvious interpretation. I believe that I have omitted none, on which any great stress is laid in the controversy ; and the reader will judge how far those which have been examined serve to support those *inferences* which tend to limit the universal import of those declarations which prove, in the literal sense of the terms, that our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, “by the grace of God, tasted death for every man.”

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## CHAPTER XXVIII.

### THEORIES WHICH LIMIT THE EXTENT OF THE DEATH OF CHRIST.

WE have, in the foregoing attempt to establish the doctrine of the redemption of all mankind against our Calvinistic brethren, taken their scheme in the sense in which it is usually understood, without noticing those minuter shades with which the system has been varied. In this discussion, it is hoped, that no expression has hitherto escaped inconsistent with candour. Doctrinal truth would be as little served by this as Christian charity ; nor ought it ever to be forgotten by the theological inquirer, that the system which we have brought under review has, in some of its branches, always

embodied, and often preserved in various parts of Christendom, that truth which is vital to the church, and salutary to the souls of men. It has numbered, too, among its votaries, many venerable names ; and many devoted and holy men, whose writings often rank among the brightest lights of scriptural criticism and practical divinity. We think the *peculiarities* of their creed clearly opposed to the sense of Scripture, and fairly chargeable *in argument* with all those consequences we have deduced from them ; and which, were it necessary to the discussion, might be characterized in still stronger language. Those consequences, however, let it be observed, we only exhibit as *logical* ones. By many of this class of divines they are denied ; by others modified ; and by a third party explained away to their own satisfaction by means of metaphysical and subtle distinctions. As logical consequences only they are, therefore, in such cases, fairly to be charged upon our opponents, in any disputes which may arise. By keeping this distinction in view, the discussion of these points may be preserved unfettered ; and candour and charity sustain no wound.

We shall now proceed to justify the general view we have taken of the Calvinistic doctrine of election, predestination, and partial redemption, by adducing the sentiments of Calvin himself, and of Calvinistic theologians and churches ; after which, our attention may be directed, briefly, to some of those more modern modifications of the system, which, though they differ not, as we think, so materially from the original model as some of their advocates suppose, yet make concessions not unimportant to the more liberal, and, as we believe, the only scriptural theory.

Calvin has at large opened his sentiments on election, in the third book of his Institutes. (1)“Predestination we call the eternal decree of God ; by which he hath determined in himself what he would have to become of every individual of mankind. For they are not all created with similar destiny ; but eternal life is foreordained for some, and eternal damnation for others. Every man, therefore, being *created for one or other of these ends*, we say, he is predestinated, either to life, or to death.” After having spoken of the election of the race of Abraham, and then of particular branches of that race, he proceeds, “Though it is sufficiently clear, that God, in his secret counsel, freely chooses whom he will, and rejects others, his gratuitous election is but half displayed till we come to particular individuals, to whom God not only offers salvation, but *assigns* it in such a manner, that the certainty of the effect is liable to no suspense or doubt.” He sums up the chapter, in

(1) The following quotations are made from ALLEN'S translation. Lond. 1823.

which he thus generally states the doctrine, in these words: (2) "In conformity, therefore, to the clear doctrine of the Scripture, we assert, that by an eternal and immutable counsel, God hath once for all determined both whom he would admit to salvation, and whom he would condemn to destruction. We affirm that this counsel, as far as concerns the elect, is founded on his gratuitous mercy, totally irrespective of human merit; but that to those whom he devotes to condemnation, the gate of life is closed by a just and irreprehensible, but *incomprehensible* judgment. In the elect, we consider calling as an evidence of election; and justification as another token of its manifestation, till they arrive in glory, which constitutes its completion. As God seals his elect by vocation and justification, so by *excluding* the reprobate from the knowledge of his name, and sanctification of his Spirit, he affords another indication of the judgment that awaits them."

In the commencement of the following chapter (3) he thus rejects the notion that predestination is to be understood as resulting from God's foreknowledge of what would be the conduct of either the elect or the reprobate. "It is a notion commonly entertained, that God, foreseeing what would be the respective merits of every individual, makes a correspondent distinction between different persons; that he adopts as his children such as he foreknows will be deserving of his grace; and devotes to the damnation of death others, whose dispositions he sees will be inclined to wickedness and impiety. Thus they not only obscure election by covering it with the veil of foreknowledge, but pretend that it originates in another cause." Consistently with this, he a little farther on asserts, that election does not flow from holiness; but holiness from election. "For when it is said, that the faithful are elected that they should be holy, it is fully implied, that the holiness they were in future to possess, had its origin in election." He proceeds to quote the example of Jacob and Esau, as loved and hated before they had done good or evil, to show that the only reason of election and reprobation is to be placed in God's "secret counsel." He will not allow the future wickedness of the reprobate to have been considered in the decree of their rejection, any more than the righteousness of the elect, as influencing their better fate. "God hath mercy on whom he will have mercy; and whom he will he hardeneth. You see how he (the apostle) attributes *both* to the *mere will* of God. If, therefore, we can assign no reason why he grants mercy to his people but because such is his pleasure, neither shall we find any other cause but *his will* for the reprobation of others. For when God is said



to harden, or show mercy to whom he pleases, men are taught by this declaration, to seek *no cause beside his will.*"(4) "Many, indeed, as if they wished to avert odium from God, admit election in such a way as to deny that any one is reprobated. But this is puerile and absurd ; because election itself could not exist, without being opposed to reprobation :—whom God *passes by, he therefore reprobates* ; and *from no other cause* than his determination to exclude them from the inheritance which he predestines for his children."(5)

This is the scheme of predestination as exhibited by Calvin ; and it is remarkable, that the answers which he is compelled to give to objections did not unfold to this great and acute man its utter contrariety to the testimony of God, and to all established notions of equity among men. To the objection taken from justice, he replies, "They (the objectors) inquire by what right the Lord is angry with his creatures who had not provoked him by any previous offence ; for that to devote to destruction whom he pleases, is more like the caprice of a tyrant, than the lawful sentence of a judge. If such thoughts ever enter into the minds of pious men, they will be sufficiently enabled to break their violence by this one consideration, how exceedingly presumptuous it is, only to inquire into the causes of the Divine *will* ; which is, in fact, and is justly entitled to be, the *cause* of every thing that exists. For if it has any cause, then there must be something antecedent on which it depends, which it is impious to suppose. For the will of God is the highest rule of justice ; so that what he wills must be considered just, for this very reason, because he wills it." The evasions are here curious. 1. He assumes the very thing in dispute, that God has willed the destruction of any part of the human race, "for no other cause than because he *wills it* ;" of which assumption there is not only not a word of proof in Scripture ; but, on the contrary, all Scripture ascribes the death of him that dieth to his own will, and not to the will of God ; and therefore contradicts his statement. 2. He pretends that to assign any *cause* to the Divine will is to suppose something antecedent to, something above God, and therefore "impious ;" as if we might not suppose something in God to be the rule of his will, not only without any impiety, but with truth and piety ; as, for instance, his perfect wisdom, holiness, justice, and goodness : or, in other words, to believe the exercise of his will to flow from the perfection of his whole nature ; a much more honourable and scriptural view of the will of God than that which subjects it to no rule, even in the nature of God himself. 3. When he calls the will of God, "the highest rule of justice," beyond which we

(4) Ibid. chap. 22.

(5) Ibid. chap. 23

cannot push our inquiries, he confounds the will of God, as a rule of justice *to us*, and as a rule to himself. This will is our rule ; yet even then, because we know that it is the will of a perfect being ; but when Calvin represents *mere will* as constituting God's own rule of justice, he shuts out knowledge, discrimination of the nature of things, and holiness ; which is saying something very different to that great truth, that God cannot will any thing but what is perfectly just. It is to say that blind will ; will which has no respect to any thing but itself ; is God's highest rule of justice ; a position which, if presented abstractedly, many of the most ultra Calvinists would spurn. 4. He determines the question by the authority of his own metaphysics, and totally forgets, that one *dictum* of inspiration overturns his whole theory,—God “*willeth* all men to be saved :” a declaration, which, in no part of the sacred volume, is opposed or limited by any contrary declaration.

Calvin, is not, however, content thus to leave the matter ; but resorts to an argument in which he has been generally followed by those who have adopted his system with some mitigations. “As we are all corrupted by sin, we must necessarily be odious to God, and that not from tyrannical cruelty ; but in the most *equitable estimation* of justice. If all whom the Lord predestinates to death are, in their natural condition, liable to the sentence of death, what injustice do they complain of receiving from him ?” To this Calvin very fairly states the obvious rejoinder made in his day ; and which the common sense of mankind will always make,—“They object, were they not by the decree of God antecedently predestinated to that corruption which is now stated as the *cause* of their condemnation ? When they perish in their corruption, therefore, they only suffer the punishment of that misery into which, in consequence of his predestination, Adam fell, and precipitated his posterity with him.” The manner in which Calvin attempts to refute this objection, shows how truly unanswerable it is upon his system. “I confess,” says he, “indeed, that all the descendants of Adam fell, *by the Divine will*, into that miserable condition in which they are now involved ; and this is what I asserted from the beginning, that we must always return at last *to the sovereign determination of God's will* ; the cause of which, is hidden in himself. But it follows not, therefore, that God is liable to this reproach ; for we will answer them in the language of Paul, ‘O man, who art thou that repliest against God ? shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus ?’” That is, in order to escape the pinch of the objection, he assumes, that St. Paul affirms that God has “formed” a part of the human race for eternal misery ; and that by

imposing silence upon them, he intended to declare that this proceeding in God was just. Now the passage may be proved from the context to mean no such thing ; but, if that failed, and it were more obscure in its meaning than it really is, such an interpretation would be contradicted by many other plain texts of holy writ, of which Calvin takes no notice. Even if this text would serve the purpose better, it gives no answer to the objection ; for we are brought round again, as indeed Calvin confesses, to his former, and indeed only argument, that the whole matter, as he states it, is to be referred back to the Divine will ; which will, though perfectly arbitrary, is, as he contends, the highest rule of justice. “I say, with Augustine, that the Lord created those whom he certainly foreknew would fall into destruction ; and that this was actually so, because *he willed it* ; but of his will, it belongs not to us to demand the reason, which we are incapable of comprehending ; nor is it reasonable, that the Divine will should be made the subject of controversy with us, which is only another name for the highest rule of justice.” Thus he shuts us out from pursuing the argument. When God places fences against our approach, we grant, that we are bound not “to break through and gaze ;” but not so, when man, without authority, usurps this authority, and warns us off from his own inclosures, as though we were trespassing upon the peculiar domains of God himself. Calvin’s evasion proves the objection unanswerable. For if all is to be resolved into the mere will of God as to the destruction of the reprobate ; if they were created for this purpose, as Calvin expressly affirms ; if they fell into their corruption in pursuance of God’s determination ; if, as he had said before, “God passes them by, and reprobates them, *from no other cause* than his determination to exclude them from the inheritance of his children,” why refer to their natural corruption at all, and their being odious to God in that state, since the same reason is given for their corruption as for their reprobation ?—not any fault of theirs ; but the mere will of God, “the reprobation hidden in his secret counsel,” and not grounded on the visible and tangible fact of their demerit. Thus the election taught by Calvin is not a choice of some persons to peculiar grace from the whole mass, equally deserving of punishment ; (though this is a sophism ; ) for, in that case, the decree of reprobation would rest upon God’s foreknowledge of those passed by as corrupt and guilty, which notion he rejects. “For since God foresees future events only in consequence of *his decree that they shall happen*, it is useless to contend about foreknowledge, while it is evident that all things come to pass rather by *ordination and decree*.” It is a HORRIBLE DECREE I con-



fess; but no one can deny that God foreknew the future fate of man before he created him; and that he did foreknow it, because it was *appointed* by his own decree. Agreeably to this, he repudiates the distinction between will and permission. "For what reason shall we assign for his permitting it, but because it is his will? It is *not probable*, however, that man procured his own destruction by the mere *permission*, and without any *appointment* of God."

With this doctrine he again makes a singular attempt to reconcile the demerit of men: "Their perdition depends on the Divine predestination in such a manner, that the *cause* and *matter* of it are found *in themselves*. For the first man fell because the Lord had determined it should so happen. The reason of this determination is unknown to us.—Man, therefore, falls according to the *appointment* of Divine Providence; but he falls by *his own fault*. The Lord had a little before pronounced every thing that he had made to be 'very good.' Whence, then, comes the depravity of man to revolt from his God? Lest it should be thought to come from creation, God approved and commended what had proceeded from himself. By his own wickedness, therefore, man corrupted the nature he had received pure from the Lord, and by his fall he drew all his posterity with him to destruction." It is in this way that Calvin attempts to avoid the charge of making God the author of sin. But how God should not merely *permit* the defection of the first man, but *appoint* it, and *will* it, and that his will should be the "necessity of things," all which he had before asserted, and yet that Deity should not be the author of that which he *appointed*, *willed*, and *imposed a necessity upon*, would be rather a delicate inquiry. It is enough that Calvin rejects the impious doctrine, and even though his principles directly lead to it, since he has put in his disclaimer, he is entitled to be exempted from the charge;—but the logical conclusion is inevitable.

In much the same manner he contends that the necessity of sinning is laid upon the reprobate by the ordination of God, and yet denies God to be the author of their sin, since the corruption of men was derived from Adam, by his own fault, and not from God. Here, also, although the difficulty still remains, of conceiving how a *necessity* of sinning should be laid on the descendants of Adam, and that without any counteraction of grace in the case of the reprobate, and that this should be attributable to the will of God as its *cause*, whilst yet God, in no sense injurious to his perfections, is to be regarded as the author of sin, we still admit Calvin's disclaimer; but then he cannot have the advantage on both sides, and must

renounce this or some of his former positions. He exhorts us “rather to contemplate the evident cause of condemnation, which is nearer to us, in the corrupt nature of mankind, than search after a hidden, and altogether incomprehensible one, in the predestination of God.” “For though, by the eternal providence of God, man was *created* to that misery to which he is subject, yet the *ground* of it he has derived from himself, not God; since he is thus ruined, solely in consequence of his having degenerated from the pure creation of God to vicious and impure depravity.” Thus, almost in the same breath, he affirms that men became reprobate from no other cause than “the will of God,” and his “sovereign determination;”—that men have no reason “to expostulate with God, if they are predestinated to eternal death, without *any demerit* of their own, merely by his sovereign will;”—and then, that the corrupt nature of mankind is the *evident* and *nearer* cause of condemnation; (which cause, however, was still a matter of “appointment,” and “ordination,” not “permission;”) and that man is “ruined solely in consequence of his having degenerated from the pure state in which God created him.” Now these propositions manifestly fight with each other; for if the reason of reprobation be laid in man’s corruption, it cannot be laid in the mere will and sovereign determination of God, unless we suppose him to be the author of sin. It is this offensive doctrine only, which can reconcile them. For if God so wills, and appoints, and necessitates the depravity of man, as to be the author of it, then there is no inconsistency in saying that the ruin of the reprobate is both from the mere will of God, and from the corruption of their nature, which is but the result of that will. The one is then, as Calvin states, the “evident and nearer cause,” the other the more remote and hidden one; yet they have the same source, and are substantially acts of the same will. But if it be denied that God is, in any sense, the author of evil, and if sin is from man alone, then is the “corruption of nature” the effect of an independent will; and if this be the “real source,” as he says, of men’s condemnation, then the decree of reprobation rests not upon the sovereign will of God, as its sole cause, which he affirms; but upon a cause dependant on the will of the first man. But as this is denied, then the other must follow. Calvin himself indeed contends for the perfect concurrence of these proximate and remote causes, although, in point of fact, to have been perfectly consistent with himself, he ought rather to have called the *mere will of God* THE CAUSE of the decree of reprobation, and the corruption of man THE MEANS by which it is carried into effect: language which he sanctions, and which many of his followers have not scrupled to adopt.

So fearfully does this opinion involve in it the consequences that in sin man is the instrument, and God the actor, that it cannot be maintained, as stated by Calvin, without this conclusion. For as two causes of reprobation are expressly laid down, they must be either opposed to each other, or be consenting. If they are opposed, the scheme is given up; if consenting, then are both reprobation and human corruption the results of the same will, the same decree, and necessity. It would be trifling to say, that the decree does not influence; for if so, it is no decree in Calvin's sense, who understands the decree of God, as the foregoing extracts and the whole third book of his Institutes plainly show, as *appointing* what shall be, and by that appointment making it *necessary*. Otherwise, he could not reject the distinction between will and permission, and avow the sentiment of St. Augustine, "that the will of God is the necessity of things; and that what he has willed, will necessarily come to pass." (6) So, in writing to Castalio, he makes the sin of Adam the result of an act of God. "You say Adam fell by his free will. I except against it. That he might not fall, he stood in need of that strength and constancy with which God armeth all the elect, as long as he will keep them blameless. Whom God has elected, he props up with an invincible power unto perseverance. Why did he not afford this to Adam, if he would have had him stand in his integrity?" (7) And with this view of necessity, as resulting from the decree of God, the immediate followers of Calvin coincide; the end and the means, as to the elect, and as to the reprobate, are equally fixed by the decree; and are both to be traced to the *appointing* and *ordaining* will of God. On such a scheme it is therefore worse than trifling to attempt to make out a case of justice in favour of this assumed Divine procedure, by alleging the corruption and guilt of man: a point which, indeed, Calvin himself, in fact, gives up when he says, "that the reprobate obey not the word of God, when made known to them, is justly imputed to the wickedness and depravity of their hearts, *provided it be at the same time stated*, that they are abandoned to this depravity, because they have been raised up by a just, but *inscrutable* judgment of God, to display his glory in their condemnation." (8)

It is by availing themselves of these ineffectual struggles of Calvin to give some colour of justice to his reprobating decree, by fixing upon the corruption of man as a cause of reprobation, that some of his followers have endeavoured, in the very teeth of his

(6) Book iii, chap. 23, sec. 8. (7) Quoted in Bishop WOMACK'S Calvinist Cabinet Unlocked, p. 34. (8) Inst. Book iii, chap. 24, sec. 14.



own express words, to reduce his system to supralapsarianism. This was attempted by Amyraldus ; who was answered by Curcellœus, in his tract “*De Jure Dei in Creaturas.*” This last writer, partly by several of the same passages we have given above from Calvin’s Institutes, and by extracts from his other writings, proves that Calvin did by no means consider man, as fallen, to be the object of reprobation ; but man not yet created ; man as to be created, and so reprobated, under no consideration in the Divine mind of his fall or actual guilt, except as *consequences* of an eternal preterition of the *persons* of the reprobate, resolvable only into the sovereign pleasure of God. The references he makes to men as corrupt, and to their corrupt state as the proximate cause of their rejection, are all manifestly used to parry off rather than to answer objections, and somewhat to soften, as Curcellœus observes, the harsher parts of his system. And, indeed, for what reason are we so often brought back to that unfailing refuge of Calvin and his followers, “the presumption and wickedness of replying against God ?” For if reprobation be a matter of human *desert*, it cannot be a mystery ; if it be adequate punishment for an adequate fault, there is no need to urge it upon us to bow with submission to an unexplained sovereignty. We may add, there is no need to speak of a remote or first cause of reprobation, if the *proximate* cause will explain the whole case ; and that Calvin’s continual reference to God’s *secret counsel*, and *will*, and *inscrutable judgment*, could have no aptness to his argument. (9) Among English divines, Dr. Twiss has sufficiently defended Calvin from the *charge*, as he esteems it, of sublapsarianism ; and, whatever merit Twiss’s own supralapsarian creed may have, his argument on this point is unanswerable.

This then is the doctrine of Calvin, which was followed by several of the churches of the Reformation, who in this respect distinguished themselves from the Lutherans. (1) It was a doctrine, however,

(9) Amyraldus tamen, ut eum infra lapsum substituisse probet, in constituendo reprobationis objecto, profert quædam loca in quibus ille *corruptæ massæ* meminit, et hujus decreti æquitatem *ab originali peccato* arcessit. Sed facilis est responsio. Nam Calvinus ipse, qua ratione ista cum iis quæ attuli sint concilianda nos docet : nimirum adhibita distinctione inter propinquam reprobationis causam, quam residentem in nobis corruptionem esse vult, et remotam, quæ sit unicum Dei beneplacitum. Et quanquam variis in locis causam propinquam, veluti ad sententiæ suæ duritiem emolliendam aptiorem, magis videatur urgere ; ita tamen id facit ut non rarè *consilii arcani*, *voluntatis occultæ*, *judicii inscrutabilis*, et similium, quibus primam rejectionis causam solet designare, ibidem simul meminerit.—*De Jure Dei*, &c, cap. x.

(1) “*The Reformed Church*, in the largest import of the word, comprises all the religious communities which have separated themselves from the Church of Rome. In this sense the words are often used by English writers ; but having

unknown in the primitive churches ; and may be ranked among those errors which the pagan philosophy subsequently engrafted upon the faith of Christ. (2)

Bishop Tomline's "Refutation of Calvinism," although very erroneous in some of its doctrinal views, has some valuable and conclusive quotations from the ancient Fathers, proving "that the peculiar tenets of Calvinism are in direct opposition to the doctrines maintained in the first ages." They also show that there is a great similarity between some points in that system and several of the most prevalent of the early heresies. "The Manicheans denied the freedom of the human will ; and spoke of the elect as persons who could not sin, or fail of salvation." The fruitful source of these notions was the Gnosticism of early times, which was the worst part of the speculative pagan philosophy, engrafted on a corrupted Christianity ; and was vigorously opposed by the Fathers, from the earliest date. In this system of affected and dreaming wisdom it was assumed, that some souls were created bad, and others good ; and that they sprung, therefore, from different principles, or creators. Origen contended, in opposition to these speculations, that all souls were by nature of the same quality ; that the use of the freedom of will made the differences we see in practice ; and that this liberty rendered them liable to reward and to punishment ; ascribing, however, this recovered freedom of the will, which had been lost in Adam, to the grace of Christ. The Platonism which he mixed up with his system was justly resisted in the church ; but his doctrine of the freedom of the will prevailed generally in the east. It was afterwards carried to a dangerous extent by Pelagius, whose doctrine was modified by Cassian. These discussions called Augustine into a controversy which carried him

been adopted by the French Calvinists to describe *their* Church, this term is most commonly used on the Continent as a general appellation of all the churches who profess the doctrines of Calvin. About the year 1541, the church of Geneva was placed by the magistrates of that city under the direction of Calvin, where his learning, eloquence, and talents for business, soon attracted general notice. By degrees his fame reached to every part of Europe. Having prevailed upon the senate of Geneva to found an academy, and place it under his superintendence ; and having filled it with men, eminent throughout Europe for their learning and talent, it became the favourite resort of all persons who leaned to the new principles, and sought religious and literary instruction. From Germany, France, Italy, England, and Scotland, numbers crowded to the new academy, and returned from it to their native countries, saturated with the doctrine of Geneva ; and burning with zeal to propagate its creed."—BUTLER'S Life of Grotius.

(2) This was the view of MELANCTHON, who in writing to Peucer, says, "Lælius writes to me and says, that the controversy respecting the STOICAL FATE, is agitated with such uncommon fervour at Geneva, that one individual is cast into prison because he happened to differ from Zeno."

to the opposite extreme; and appears to have revived the Manichean notions of his youth in such a degree as greatly to tinge many parts of his system with that heresy. He was a powerful, but unsteady writer; and has expressed himself so inconsistently as to have divided the opinions of the Latin church, where his authority has always been greatest. He held, although his writings afford many passages contradictory of the statement, that "God, from the foundation of the world, decreed to save some men, and to consign others to eternal punishment." Notwithstanding his authority, his views on predestination and grace appear to have made no great impression upon even the western church, where the *Collations of Cassian*, a disciple of Chrysostom, a work which has been called semi-Pelagian, was held in extensive estimation; so that substantially no great difference of opinion appeared between the western and the Greek churches, on these points, for several centuries. In the ninth century St. Austin's doctrines were revived and asserted by Goteschale, who was as absurdly as wickedly persecuted on that account. His doctrines were condemned in two councils; and the controversy was laid to rest, until the subtle questions contained in it were revived by the schoolmen. Thomas Aquinas and the Dominicans adopted the strongest views of Augustine on predestination and necessity, and improved upon them; Scotus and the Franciscans took the opposite side; and the infallibility of the Pope has not yet been employed to settle this point. By condemning Jansenius, however, whilst it has honoured Augustine, that church, as Bayle observes,(3) has involved itself in great perplexities. The authority of this Father with the church of Rome was indeed an advantage which the first Reformers did not fail to make use of. From him they supported their views on justification by faith; and finding so much of evangelical truth on this and some other subjects in his writings, they were insensibly biassed to the worst parts of his system. Luther recovered from this error in the latter part of his life; and the Lutheran churches settled in the doctrine of universal redemption.(4) Augustinism, as perfected

(3) Dictionary, Art. Augustine.

(4) "It is pleasing," says Dr. COPLESTON, "and satisfactory, to trace the progress of Melancthon's opinions upon the subject. In the first dawning of the Reformation, he, as well as Luther, had been led into those metaphysical discussions which Calvin afterwards moulded into a system, and incorporated with his exposition of the Christian doctrine. But so early as the year 1529 he renounced this error, and expunged the passages that contained it from the later editions of his *Loci Theologici*. Luther, who had in his early life maintained the same opinions, after the controversy with Erasmus about free-will, never taught them; and although he did not, with the candour of Melancthon, openly retract what he had once written, yet he bestowed the highest commendations on the last editions of



and systematised by the able hand of Calvin, was received by several of the Reformed churches; and gave rise to a controversy which has remained to this day, though happily it has of late been conducted with less asperity. The system, as issued by Calvin, has, however, undergone various modifications: some theologians and their followers, having carried out his principles to their full length, so as to advocate or sanction the Antinomian heresy; whilst others, either to avoid this fearful result, or perceiving the discrepancy of the harsher parts of the theory with the word of God, have impressed upon it a more mitigated aspect.

The three leading schemes of predestination, prevalent among the Reformed churches previous to the Synod of Dort, are thus stated in the celebrated Declaration of Arminius before the states of Holland. They comprehend the theories generally known by the names of supralapsarian and sublapsarian.

“The FIRST, or Creabiltarian, or supralapsarian opinion is,  
 1. That God has absolutely and precisely decreed to save certain particular men by his mercy or grace; but to condemn others by his justice; and to do all this, without having any regard in such decree to righteousness or sin, obedience or disobedience, which could possibly exist on the part of one class of men, or the other.  
 2. That for the execution of the preceding degree, God determined to create Adam, and all men in him, in an upright state of original righteousness; besides which, he also ordained them to commit sin, that they might thus become guilty of eternal condemnation, and be deprived of original righteousness.  
 3. That those persons whom God has thus positively wished to save, he has decreed, not only to salvation, but also to the means which pertain to it; that is, to conduct and bring them to faith in Christ Jesus, and to perseverance in that faith; and that he also leads them to these results by a grace and power that are irresistible; so that it is not possible for them to do otherwise than believe, persevere in faith, and be saved.  
 4. That to those, whom, by his absolute will, God has foreordained to perdition, he has also decreed to deny that grace which is neces-

Melancthon's work, containing this correction.(g) He also scrupled not to assert publicly, that at the beginning of the Reformation, his creed was not completely settled :(h) and in his last work of any importance, he is anxious to point out the qualifications, with which all he had ever said, on the doctrine of absolute necessity, ought to be received.” “Vos ergo, qui nunc me audistis, memineritis me hoc docuisse, non esse inquirendum de Prædestinatione *Dei absconditi*, sed in illis acquiescendum, quæ revelantur per vocationem et per ministerium verbi . . . Hæc eadem alibi quoque in meis libris protestatus sum, et nunc etiam viva voce trado: *Ideo sum excusatus*.(i)

(g) Pref. to the first vol. of Luther's works, A. D. 1546.

(h) Laur. Bampton. Lect. note 21 to Sermon ii.

(i) Op. vol. vi, p. 325.

sary and sufficient for salvation ; and does not, in reality, confer it upon them ; so that they are neither placed in a possible condition, nor in any capacity of believing, or of being saved.”(5)

The SECOND opinion differs from the former ; but is still supralapsarian. It is,

“ 1. That God determined within himself, by an eternal immutable decree, to make, according to his good pleasure, the smaller portion out of the general mass of mankind partakers of his grace and glory. But, according to his pleasure, he passed by the greater portion of men, and left them in their own nature, which is incapable of any thing supernatural ; and did not communicate to them that saving and supernatural grace by which their nature, if it still retained its integrity, might be strengthened ; or by which, if it were corrupted, it might be restored, for a demonstration of his own liberty : yet after God had made these men sinners, and guilty of death, he punished them with death eternal, for a demonstration of his justice.”—“ As far as we are capable of comprehending their scheme of reprobation it consists of two acts, that of PRETERITION, and that of PREDAMNATION. PRETERITION is antecedent to all things, and to all causes which are either in the things themselves, or which arise out of them ; that is, it has no regard whatever to any sin, and only views man under an absolute and general aspect. Two means are foreordained for the execution of the act of PRETERITION : *dereliction* in a state of nature which, by itself, is incapable of every thing supernatural ; and the *non-communication* of supernatural grace, by which their nature, if in a state of integrity, might be strengthened, and if in a state of corruption, might be restored. PREDAMNATION is antecedent to all things ; yet it does by no means exist without a foreknowledge of the cause of damnation. It views man as a sinner obnoxious to damnation in Adam, and as, on this account, perishing through the necessity of Divine justice.”

This opinion differs from the first in this, that it does not lay down the creation or the fall as a *mediate cause*, foreordained of God for the execution of the decree of reprobation ; yet this second kind of predestination places election, with regard to the end, *before* the fall, as also preterition, or passing by, which is the first part of reprobation. “ But though the inventors of this scheme,” says Arminius, “ have been desirous of using the greatest precaution,

(5) This statement of the supralapsarian and sublapsarian theories, as given by Arminius, might be illustrated and verified by quotations from the elder Calvinistic divines : the reader will, however, find what is amply sufficient in those given in Bishop WOMACK'S Calvinistic Cabinet Unlocked.

lest it might be concluded from their doctrine, that God is the author of sin with as much show of probability as it is deducible from the first scheme ; yet we shall discover, that the fall of Adam cannot possibly, according to their views, be considered in any other manner than as a *necessary means* for the execution of the preceding decree of predestination. For, first, it states that God determined by the decree of reprobation to deny to man that grace which was necessary for the confirmation and strengthening of his nature, that it might not be corrupted by sin ; which amounts to this, that God decreed not to bestow that grace which was necessary to avoid sin ; and from this must necessarily follow the transgression of man, as proceeding from a law imposed upon him. The fall of man is, therefore, a *means* ordained for the execution of the decree of reprobation."

"2. It states the two parts of reprobation to be *preterition* and *predamnation*. Those two parts, (although the latter views man as a sinner, and obnoxious to justice,) are, according to that decree, connected together by a *necessary* and *mutual bond*, and are equally extensive ; for those whom God *passed by* in conferring grace, are likewise damned. Indeed, no others are damned except those who are the subjects of this act of preterition. From this, therefore, it must be concluded, that sin necessarily follows from the decree of reprobation or preterition ; because, if it were otherwise, it might possibly happen, that a person who had been *passed by* might not commit sin, and from that circumstance might not become liable to damnation. This second opinion on predestination, therefore, falls into the same inconvenience as the first,—the making God the author of sin."(6)

The THIRD opinion is sublapsarian ; in which man, as the object of predestination, is considered as *fallen*.(7) It is thus epitomised by Arminius :

(6) Declaration.

(7) The question as to the *object* of the decrees, has gone out, as Goodwin says, among our Calvinistic brethren into "endless digladiations and irreconcilable divisions:—some of them hold, that men simply and indefinitely considered, are the object of these decrees. Others contend, that men considered as yet to be created, are this object. A third sort stands up against both the former with this notion, that men considered as already created and made, are this object. A fourth disparageth the conjectures of the three former with this conceit, that men considered as fallen, are this object. Another findeth a defect in the singleness or simplicity of all the former opinions, and compoundeth this in opposition to them, that men considered both as to be created, and as being created and as fallen, together, are the proper object of these troublesome decrees. A sixth sort formeth us yet another object, and this is, man considered as salvable, or capable of being saved. A seventh, not liking the faint complexion of any of the former opinions, delivereth this to us as strong and healthful, that men considered as damnable, are



“Because God willed within himself from all eternity to make a decree by which he might elect certain men and reprobate the rest, he viewed and considered the human race not only *as created*, but likewise as *fallen*, or *corrupt*; and, on that account, obnoxious to malediction. Out of this lapsed and accursed state God determined to liberate certain individuals, and freely to save them by his grace, for a declaration of his mercy; but he resolved, in his own just judgment, to leave the rest under malediction, for a declaration of his justice. In both these cases God acts without the least consideration of repentance and faith in those whom he elects, or of impenitence and unbelief in those whom he reprobates. This opinion places the fall of man, not as a means foreordained for the execution of the decree of predestination, as before explained; but as something that might furnish a *proæresis*, or occasion for this decree of predestination. (8)

With this opinion, however, the *necessity* of the fall is so generally connected, that it escapes the difficulties which environ the preceding scheme in words only; for whether, in the decree of predestination, man is considered as creatible, or created and fallen, if a necessity be laid upon any part of the race to sin, and to be made miserable, whether from that which rendered the fall inevitable, or that which rendered the fall the inevitable means of corrupting their nature, and producing entire moral disability without relief, the condition of the reprobate remains substantially the same; and the administration under which they are placed, is equally opposed to justice as to grace. For let us shut out all these fine distinctions between acts of sovereignty and acts of justice, preterition and predamnation, and fully allow the principle, that all are fallen in Adam, in what way can even the sublapsarian doctrine be supported? It has two objects; to avoid the imputation of making God the author of sin, and to repel the charge of his dealing with his creatures unjustly. We need only take the latter as necessary to the argument, and show how utterly they fail to turn aside this most fatal objection drawn from the justice of the Divine nature and administration.

this object. Others yet again, superfancying all the former, conceit men, considered as *creable*, or possible to be created, to be the object so highly contested about. A ninth party disciple the world with this doctrine, that men considered as *labiles*, or capable of falling, are the object; and whether all the scattered and conflicting opinions about the objects of our brethren's decrees of election and reprobation are bound up in this bundle or not, we cannot say.—Agreement of Brethren, &c.

In modern times these subtile distinctions have rather fallen into desuetude among Calvinists, and are reducible to a much smaller number.

(8) Ib.

It is an easy and plausible thing to say, in the usual loose and general manner of stating the sublapsarian doctrine, that the whole race having fallen in Adam, and become justly liable to eternal death, God might, without any impeachment of his justice, in the exercise of his sovereign grace, appoint some to life and salvation by Christ, and leave the others to their deserved punishment. But this is a false view of the case, built upon the false assumption that the whole race were personally and individually, in consequence of Adam's fall, absolutely liable to eternal death. That very fact which is the foundation of the whole scheme, is easy to be refuted on the clearest authority of Scripture ; whilst not a passage can be adduced, we may boldly affirm, which sanctions any such doctrine.

“The wages of sin is death.” That the death which is the wages or penalty of sin extends to eternal death, we have before proved. But “sin is the transgression of the law ;” and in no other light is it represented in Scripture, when eternal death is threatened as its penalty, than as the act of a rational being sinning against a law known or knowable ; and as an act avoidable, and not forced or necessary.

Taking these principles, let them be applied to the case before us.

The scheme of predestination in question contemplates the human race as fallen in Adam. It must, therefore, contemplate them either as seminally in Adam, not being yet born ; or as to be actually born into the world.

In the former case, the only actual beings to be charged with sin, “the transgression of the law,” were Adam and Eve ; for the rest of the human race not being actually existent, were not capable of transgressing ; or if they were, in a vague sense, capable of it by virtue of the federal character of Adam ; yet then only as *potential*, and not as *actual* beings, beings, as the logicians say, *in posse*, not *in esse*. Our first parents rendered themselves liable to eternal death. This is granted ; and had they died “IN THE DAY” they sinned, which, but for the introduction of a system of merey and long suffering, and the appointment of a new kind of probation, for any thing that appears, they must have done, the human race would have perished with them, and the only conscious sinners would have been the only conscious sufferers. But then this lays no foundation for election and reprobation ;—the whole race would thus have perished without the vouchsafement of mercy to any.

This predestination must, therefore, respect the human race fallen in Adam, as to be born actually, and to have a real as well as a potential existence ; and the doctrine will be, that the race so contemplated were made unconditionally liable to eternal death.

In this case the decree takes effect immediately upon the fall, and determines the condition of every individual, in respect to his being elected from this common misery, or his being left in it ; and it rests its plea of *justice* upon the assumed fact, that every man is absolutely liable to eternal death wholly and entirely for the sin of Adam, a sin to which he was not a consenting party, because he was not in actual existence. But if eternal death be the “wages of sin ;” and the sin which receives such wages be the transgression of a law by a voluntary agent, (and this is the rule as laid down by God himself,) then on no scriptural principle is the human race to be considered absolutely liable to personal and conscious eternal death for the sin of Adam ; and so the very ground assumed by the advocates of this theory is unfounded.

But perhaps they will bring into consideration the foreknowledge of actual transgression as contemplated by the decree, though this notion is repudiated by Calvin, and the rigid divines of his school ; but we reply to this, that either the sin of Adam was a sufficient reason for the actual infliction of a sentence of eternal death upon his descendants, or it was not. If not, then no man will be punished with eternal death, as the consequence of Adam’s sin, and that sentence will rest upon actual transgressions alone. If, then, this be allowed, there comes in an important inquiry : Are the actual transgressions of the non-elect evitable, or necessary ? If the former, then even the reprobate, without the grace of Christ, which they cannot have, because he died not for them, may avoid all sin, and consequently keep the whole law of God, and claim, though still reprobates, to be justified by their works. But if sin be unavoidable and necessary as to them, in consequence both of the corrupt nature they have derived from Adam, and the withholding of that sanctifying influence which can be imparted only to the elect, for whom alone Christ died, how are they to be proved *justly* liable, on that account, to eternal death ? This is the penalty of sin, of sin as the transgression of the law ; but then law is given only to creatures in a state of trial, either to those who, from their unimpaired powers, are able to keep it ; or to those to whom is made the promise of gracious assistance, upon their asking it, in order that they may be enabled to obey the will of God ; and in no case are those to whom God issues his commands supposed in Scripture to be absolutely incapable of obedience, much less liable to be punished, without remedy, for not obeying, if so incapacitated. This would, indeed, make the Divine Being a hard master, “reaping where he has not sown ;” which is the language only of the “wicked servant ;” and therefore to be abhorred by all good men. But if a point so



obviously at variance with truth and equity be maintained, the doctrine comes to this, that men are considered, in the Divine decree, as justly liable to eternal death, (their actual sins being foreseen,) because they have been placed by some previous decree, or higher branch of the same decree, in circumstances which necessitate them to sin : a doctrine which raises sublapsarianism into supralapsarianism itself. This is not the view which God gives us of his own justice ; and it is contradicted by every notion of justice which has ever obtained among men : nor is it at all relieved by the subtilty of Zanchius and others, who distinguish between being *necessitated* to sin, and being *forced* to sin ; and argue, that because in sinning the reprobate follow the motions of their own will, they are justly punishable ; though in this they fulfil the predestination of God. The true question is, and it is not at all affected by such merely verbal distinctions, Can the reprobate do otherwise than sin, and could they ever do otherwise ? They sin *willingly*, it is said. This is granted ; but could they ever *will* otherwise ? The will is but one of many diseased powers of the soul. Is there, as to them, any cure for this disease of the will ? According to this scheme, there is not ; and they *will* from necessity, as well as *act* from necessity ; so that the difficulty, though thrown a step backward, remains in full force.

In support of their notion, that the penalty attached to original sin is eternal death, they allege, it is true, that the apostle Paul represents all men under condemnation in consequence of their connexion with the first Adam ; and attributes the salvation of those who are rescued from the ruin, only to the obedience of the second Adam. This is granted ; but it will not avail to establish their position that, the human race being all under an absolute sentence of condemnation *to eternal death*, Almighty God, in the exercise of his sovereign grace, elected a part of them to salvation, and left the remainder to the justice of their previous sentence.

For, 1. Supposing that the whole human race were under condemnation in their sense, this will not account for the punishment of those who reject the Gospel. Their rejecting the Gospel is represented in Scripture as the sole cause of their *condemnation*, and never merely as an aggravating cause, as though they were under an *irreversible* previous sentence of death, and that this refusal of the Gospel only heightened a previously certain and inevitable punishment. An aggravated cause of condemnation it is ; but for this reason, that it is the rejection of a *remedy*, and an abuse of mercy, neither of which could have any place in a previously fixed condition of reprobation. If, therefore, it is true that “ THIS is the

condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light," we must conclude, that the previous state of condemnation was not irremediable and unalterable, or this circumstance, the rejection "*of the light*," or revelation of mercy in the Gospel, could not be their condemnation.

2. Leaving the meaning of the apostle in Rom. v, out of our consideration for a moment, the Scriptures never place the final condemnation of men upon the ground of Adam's offence, and their connexion with him. ACTUAL sin forms the ground of every reproving charge; of every commination; and, beyond all doubt, of the condemnatory sentence at the day of judgment. To what ought we to refer, as explaining the true cause of the eternal punishment of any portion of our race, but to the proceedings of that day, when that eternal punishment is to be awarded? Of the reason of this proceeding, of the facts to be charged, and of the sins to be punished, we have very copious information in the Scriptures; but these are evil works, and *disbelief of the Gospel*. Nowhere is it said, or even hinted in the most distant manner, that men will be sentenced to eternal death, at that day, either because of Adam's sin, or because their connexion with Adam made them inevitably corrupt in nature, and unholy in conduct; from which effects they could not escape, because God had from eternity resolved to deny them the grace necessary to this end.

3. The true view of the apostle's doctrine in Rom. v, is to be ascertained, not by making partial extracts from his discourse; but by taking the argument entire, and in all its parts.

The Calvinists assume, that the apostle represents what the penal condition of the human race would have been had not Christ interposed as our Redeemer. Here is one of their great and leading mistakes; for St. Paul does not touch this point. The Calvinist assumes, that the whole race of men, but for the decree of election, would not only have come into actual being, but have been actually and individually punished for ever; and, on this assumption, endeavours to justify his doctrine of the arbitrary selection of a part of mankind to grace and salvation, the other being left in the state in which they were found. Even this is contrary to other parts of their own system; for the reprobate are placed in an infinitely worse condition than had they been merely thus left without a share in Christ's redemption; because, even according to Calvinistic interpreters their condemnation is fearfully aggravated; and by that which they have no means of avoiding, by actual sin and unbelief. But the assumption itself is wholly imaginary. For the apostle speaks not of what the human race would have been, that

is, he affirms nothing as to their penal condition, in case Christ had not undertaken the office of Redeemer ; but he looks at their moral state and penal condition, as the case actually stands : in other words, he takes the state of man as it was actually established after the fall, as recorded in the book of Genesis. No child of Adam was actually born into the world until the promise of a Redeemer had been given, and the virtue of his anticipated redemption had begun to apply itself to the case of the fallen pair ; consequently, all mankind are born under a constitution of mercy, which actually existed before their birth. What the race would have been, had not the redeeming plan been brought in, the Scriptures nowhere tell us, except that a sentence of death to be executed "*in the day*" in which the first pair sinned, was the sanction of the law under which they were placed ; and it is great presumption to assume it as a truth, that they would have multiplied their species only for eternal destruction. That the race would have been propagated under an absolute necessity of sinning, and of being made eternally miserable, we may boldly affirm to be impossible ; because it supposes an administration contradicted by every attribute which the Scriptures ascribe to God. What the actual state of the human race is, in consequence *both* of the fall of Adam and of the interposition of Christ ; of the imputation of the effects of the offence of the one, and of the obedience of the other ; is the only point to which our inquiries can go, and to which, indeed, the argument of the apostle is confined.

There is, it is true, an imputation of the consequences of Adam's sin to his posterity, independent of their personal offences ; but we can only ascertain what these consequences are by referring to the apostle himself. One of these consequences is asserted explicitly, and others are necessarily implied in this chapter and in other parts of his writings. That which is here explicitly asserted is, that DEATH passed upon all men, though they have not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, that is, not personally ; and therefore this death is to be regarded as the result of Adam's transgression alone, and of our having been so far "constituted sinners" in him, as to be liable to it. But then the death of which he *here* speaks, is the death of the body ; for his argument, that "death reigned from Adam to Moses," obliges us to understand him as speaking of the visible and known fact, that men in those ages died as to the body, since he could not intend to say that all the generations of men, from Adam to Moses, died eternally. The death of the body, then, is the first effect of the imputation of Adam's sin to his descendants, as stated in this chapter. A second is necessarily



implied ; a state of spiritual death,—the being born into the world with a corrupt nature, always tending to actual offence. This is known to be the apostle's opinion, from other parts of his writings ; but that passage in this chapter in which it is necessarily implied, is verse 16 : “The free gift is of *many offences* unto justification.” If men need justification of “many offences ;” if all men need this, and that under a dispensation of help and spiritual healing ; then the *nature* which universally leads to offences so numerous must be inherently and universally corrupt. A third consequence is a *conditional* liability to eternal death ; for that state which makes us liable to actual sin, makes us also liable to actual punishment. But this is conditional, not absolute ; for since the apostle makes the obedience of Christ available to the forgiveness of the “many offences” we may commit in consequence of the corrupt nature we have derived from Adam, and extends this to all men, they can only perish by their own fault. Now beyond these three effects we do not find that the apostle carries the consequence of Adam's sin. Of unpardoned “offences” eternal death is the consequence ; but these are personal. Of the sin of Adam, imputed, these are the consequences,—the death of the body,—and our introduction into the world with a nature tending to actual offences, and a conditional liability to punishment. But both are connected with a remedy as extensive as the disease. For the first, the resurrection from the dead ; for the other, the healing of grace and the promise of pardon, and thus though “condemnation” has passed upon “*all men*,” yet the free gift unto justification of life passes upon “*all men*” also,—the same general terms being used by the apostle in each case. The effects of “the free gift” are not immediate, the reign of death remains till the resurrection ; but “in Christ shall all be made alive,” and it is every man's own fault, not his fate, if his resurrection be not a happy one. The corrupt nature remains till the healing is applied by the Spirit of God ; but it is provided, and is actually applied in the case of all those dying in infancy, as we have already showed ; (9) whilst justification and regeneration are offered, through specified means and conditions, to all who are of the age of reason and choice, and thus the sentence of eternal death may be reversed. What then becomes of the premises in the sublapsarian theory which we have been examining, that in Adam all men are absolutely condemned to eternal death ? Had Christ not undertaken human redemption, we have no proof, no indication in Scripture, that for Adam's sin any but the actually guilty pair would have been doomed to this condemnation ; and though now the race

(9) See vol. ii, chap. 18.

having become actually existent, is for this sin, and for the demonstration of God's hatred of sin in general, involved, through a federal relation and by an imputation of Adam's sin, in the effects above mentioned; yet a universal remedy is provided.

But we are not to be confined even to this view of the grace of God, when we speak of actual offences. Here the case is even strengthened. The redemption of Christ extends not merely to the removal of the evils laid upon us by the imputation of Adam's transgression; but to those which are the effects of our own personal choice—to the forgiveness of "many offences," upon our repentance and faith, however numerous and aggravated they may be;—to the bestowing of "abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness;"—and not merely to the reversal of the sentence of death, but to our "*reigning in life by Jesus Christ:*" so that "where sin abounded grace did much more abound; that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness, unto *eternal life:*"—which phrase, in the New Testament, does never mean less than the glorification of the bodies and souls of believers in the kingdom of God, and in the presence and enjoyment of the eternal glory of Christ.

So utterly without foundation is the leading assumption in the sublapsarian scheme, that the decree of election and reprobation finds the human race in a state of common and absolute liability to personal eternal punishment; and that by making a sovereign selection of a part of mankind, God does no injustice to the rest by passing them by. The word of God asserts no such doctrine as the absolute condemnation of the race to eternal death, merely for Adam's offence; and if it did, the merciful result of the obedience of Christ is declared to be not only as extensive as the evil, in respect of the number of persons so involved; but in "grace" to be more abounding. Finally, this assumption falls short of the purpose for which it is made; because the mere "passing by" of a part of the race, already, according to them, under eternal condemnation, and which they contend inflicts no injustice upon them, does not account for their additional and aggravated punishment for doing what they had never the natural or dispensed power of avoiding,—breaking God's holy laws, and rejecting his Gospel. Upon a close examination of the sublapsarian scheme, it will be found, therefore, to involve all the leading difficulties of the Calvinistic theory as it is broadly exhibited by Calvin himself. In both cases reprobation is grounded on an act of mere will, resting on no reason: it respects not in either, as its primary cause, the demerit of the creature; and it punishes eternally without personal guilt, arising either from actual

sin, or from the rejection of the Gospel. Both unite in making sin a *necessary* result of the circumstances in which God has placed a great part of mankind, which, by no effort of theirs, can be avoided; or what is the same thing, which they shall never be disposed to avoid; and how either of these schemes, in strict consequence, can escape the charge of making God the author of sin, which the Synod of Dort acknowledges to be “blasphemy,” is inconceivable. For how does it alter the case of the reprobate, whether the fall of Adam himself was necessitated, or whether he acted freely? *They*, at least, are necessitated to sin; they come into the world under a necessitating constitution, which is the result of an act to which they gave no consent; and their case differs nothing, except in circumstances which do not alter its essential character, from that of beings *immediately created* by God with a nature necessarily producing sinful acts, and to counteract which there is no remedy:—a case which few have been bold enough to suppose.

The different views of the doctrine of predestination, as stated above, greatly agitated the Protestant world, from the time of Calvin to the sitting of the celebrated Synod of Dort, whose decisions on this point, having been received as a standard by several churches and by many theologians, may next be properly introduced; although, after what has been said, they call only for brief remark.

“The Judgment of the Synod of the Reformed Belgic churches,” to which many divines of note of other reformed churches were admitted, “on the articles controverted in the Belgic churches,” was drawn up in Latin, and read in the great church at Dort, in the year 1619; and a translation into English of this “Judgment,” with the Synod’s “Rejection of Errors,” was published in the same year.(1) This translation having become scarce, or not being known to Mr. Scott, he published a new translation in 1818, from which, as being in more modern English, and, as far as I have compared it, unexceptionably faithful, I shall take the extracts necessary to exhibit the Synod’s decision on the point before us.

Art. 1. “As all men have sinned in Adam, and have become exposed to the curse and eternal death, God would have done no injustice to any one, if he had determined to leave the whole human race under sin and the curse, and to condemn them on account of sin; according to the words of the apostle, ‘all the world is become guilty before God,’ Rom. iii, 19. ‘All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God,’ 23; and ‘the wages of sin is death,’ Rom. vi, 23.”

The Synod here assumes that all men, in consequence of Adam’s sin, have become exposed to the curse of “*eternal death*,” and they

(1) London, printed by John Bill.



quote passages to prove it, which manifestly prove nothing to the point. The two first speak of actual sin ; the third, of the wages, or penalty of actual sin, as the context of each will show. The very texts adduced, show how totally at a loss the Synod was for any thing like scriptural evidence of this strange doctrine ; which, however, as we have seen, would not, if true, help them through their difficulties, seeing it leaves the punishment of the reprobate for actual sin and for disbelief of the Gospel, still unaccounted for on every principle of justice.

Art. 4. "They who believe not the Gospel, on them the wrath of God remaineth ; but those who receive it, and embrace the Saviour Jesus with a true and living faith ; are, through him, delivered from the wrath of God, and receive the gift of everlasting life."

To this there is nothing to object ; only it is to be observed, that those who are not elected to eternal life out of the common mass, are not, according to this article, merely left and passed by ; but are brought under an obligation of believing the Gospel, which, nevertheless, is no "good news" to them, and in which they have no interest at all ; and yet, in default of believing, "the wrath of God abideth upon them." Thus there is, in fact, no alternative for them. They cannot believe, or else it would follow that those reprobated might be saved ; and, therefore, the wrath of God "abideth upon them," for no *fault* of their own. This, however, the next article denies.

Art. 5. "The cause or *fault* of this unbelief, as also of all other sins, is, by no means in God ; but in man. But faith in Jesus Christ and salvation by him, is the *free gift* of God. 'By grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God,' Eph. ii, 8. In like manner, 'it is *given* to you to believe in Christ,' Phil. i, 29."

These passages would be singular proofs that the *fault* of unbelief is in men themselves, did not the next article explain the connexion between them and the premises in the minds of the Synodists. A much more appropriate text, but a rather difficult one on their theory, would have been, "ye have not, because ye ask not."

Art. 6. "That some, *in time*, have faith given them by God, and others have it not given, proceeds from his *eternal decree* ; for '*known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world*,' Acts xv, 18. According to which decree, he gradually softens the hearts of the elect, however hard, and he bends them to believe ; but the non-elect he leaves, *in just judgment*, to their own perversity and hardness. And here especially, a deep discrimination, at the same time both merciful and just, a discrimination of men equally lost,

opens itself to us ; or that decree of election and reprobation which is revealed in the word of God ; which as perverse, impure, and unstable persons do wrest to their own destruction, so it affords ineffable consolation to holy and pious souls."

To this article the Synod appends no Scripture proofs ; which if the doctrines it contains were, as the Synodists say, "revealed in the word of God," would not have been wanting. The passage which stands in the middle of the article could scarcely be intended as a proof, since it would equally apply to any other doctrine which does not shut out the prescience of God. The doctrine of the two articles just quoted, will be seen by taking them together. The position laid down is, that "the *fault*" of not believing the Gospel is "*in man*." The alleged proof of this is, that faith is the *gift* of God. But this only proves that the fault of not believing is in man, just as it allows that God, the giver of faith, is willing to give faith to those who have it not, and that they will not receive it. In no other way can it prove the faultiness of man ; for to what end are we taught that faith is the gift of God in order to prove the fault of not believing to be in man, if God will not bestow the gift, and if man cannot believe without such bestowment ? This, however, is precisely what the Synod teaches. It argues, that faith is the gift of God ; that it is only given to "*some* ;" and that this proceeds from God's "eternal decree." So that, by virtue of this decree, he gives faith to some, and withholds it from others, who are, thereupon, left without the power of believing ; and for this *act of God*, therefore, and not for a fault of their own, they are punished eternally. And yet the Synod calls this a "just judgment ; affording ineffable consolation to holy souls," and a "doctrine only rejected by the perverse and impure !"

As we have already quoted and commented on the 7th and 8th articles on election, we proceed to

Art. 10. "Now the cause of this gratuitous election is the sole good pleasure of God ; not consisting in this, that he elected into the condition of salvation certain qualities or human actions, from all that were possible ; but in that, out of the common multitude of sinners, he took to himself certain persons as his peculiar property, according to the Scripture, 'for the *children* being not born, neither having done any good or evil, &c, it is said (that is to Rebecca) the elder shall serve the younger ; even as it is written, Jacob have I loved ; but Esau have I hated,' Rom. ix, 11-13. 'And as many as were ordained to eternal life believed,' Acts xiii, 48."

Thus the ground of this election is resolved wholly into the "good pleasure of God," (*est solum Dei beneplacitum*) "having no

respect, as to its REASON, OR CONDITION, though it may have as to its END, to any foreseen faith, obedience of faith, or any other good quality and disposition," as it is expressed in the preceding article. Let us, then, see how the case stands with the reprobate.

Art. 15. "Moreover, Holy Scripture doth illustrate and commend to us this eternal and free grace of our election, in this more especially, that it doth also testify all men not to be elected; but that some are *non-elect*, or *passed by* in the eternal election of God: whom, truly, God, from most free, just, irreprehensible, and immutable good pleasure, decreed to leave in the *common misery* into which they had, by *their own fault*, cast themselves, and *not to bestow on them living faith, and the grace* of conversion; but having left them in their own ways, and under just judgment, at length, not only on account of their unbelief, but also of all *their other sins*, to condemn, and eternally punish them for the manifestation of his own justice. And this is the decree of *reprobation* which determines that God is in no wise the author of sin; (which, to be thought of, is blasphemy;) but a tremendous, irreprehensible, just judge and avenger."

Thus we hear the Synodists confessing, in the same breath in which they plausibly represent reprobation as a mere *passing by* and leaving men "in the *common misery*," that the reprobate are punishable for their "unbelief and other sins," and so this decree imports, therefore, much more than leaving men in the "*common misery*." For this "*common misery*" can mean no more than the misery common to all mankind by the sin of Adam, into which his fall plunged the elect, as well as the reprobate; and to be "*left*" in it, must be understood of being left to the sole consequences of that offence. Now, were it even to be conceded that these consequences extend to *personal and conscious eternal punishment*, which has been disproved; yet, even then, their decree has a much more formidable aspect, terrible and repulsive as this alone would be. For we are expressly told, that God not only "decreed to leave them in this misery," but "not to bestow on them living faith, and the grace of conversion;" and then to condemn, and eternally punish them, "on account of their unbelief," which, by their own showing, these reprobates could not avoid; and for "all their other sins," which they could not but commit, since it was "decreed" to deny to them "the grace of conversion." Thus the case of the reprobate is deeply aggravated, beyond what it could have been if they had been merely "left in the common misery;" and the Synod and its followers have, therefore, the task of showing, how the punishing of men for what they never could avoid, and which, it



was expressly decreed they never should avoid, "is a manifestation of the justice," of Almighty God.

From the above extracts it will be seen how little reason Mr. Scott had to reprove Dr. Heylin with "bearing false witness against his neighbour,(2) on account of having given a summary of the eighteen articles of the Synod, on predestination, in the following words:—"That God, by an absolute decree, hath elected to salvation, a very small number of men, without any regard to their faith and obedience whatsoever; and secluded from saving grace, all the rest of mankind, and appointed them by the same decree to eternal damnation, without any regard to their infidelity and impenitency." Whether Mr. Scott understood this controversy or not, Dr. Heylin shows, by this summary, that he neither misapprehended it, nor bore "false witness against his neighbour," in so stating it; for as to the stir made about his rendering "*multitudo*" a very small number, this verbal inaccuracy affects not the merits of the doctrine; and neither the Synodists, nor any of their followers, ever allowed the elect to be a very great number. The number, less or more, alters not the doctrine. With respect to the elect, the Synod confesses, that the decree of election has no regard, as a cause, to faith and obedience foreseen in the persons so elected; and with respect to the reprobate, although it is not so explicit in asserting that the decree of reprobation has no regard to their infidelity and impenitency, the foregoing extracts cannot possibly be interpreted into any other meaning. For it is manifestly in vain for the Synodists to attempt, in the 15th article, to gloss over the doctrine, by saying that men "*cast themselves* into the common misery by their *own fault*," when they only mean, that they were cast into it by Adam and by *his* fault. If they intended to ground their decree of reprobation on foresight of the *personal* offences of the reprobate, they would have said this in so many words; but the materials of which the Synod was composed forbade such a declaration; and they themselves, in the "Rejection of Errors," appended to their chapter "*De divina Prædestinatione*," place in this list "the errors of those who teach that God has not decreed, from his own *mere just will*, to leave any *in the fall of Adam*, and in the common state of sin and damnation, or to pass them by in the communication of grace necessary to faith and conversion;" quoting, as a proof of this dogma, "He hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth," and giving no intimation that they understand this passage in any other sense than Calvin and his immediate followers have uniformly affixed to it. What

(2) Scott's Translation of the Articles of the Synod of Dort, page 120.

Dr. Heylin has said is here, then, abundantly established ; for if the decree of reprobation is to be referred to God's "*mere will*," and if its operation is to leave the reprobate "*in the fall of Adam*," and "to pass them by in that communication of grace which is *necessary* to faith and conversion," the decree itself is that which prevents both penitence and faith, and stands upon some other ground than the personal infidelity and impenitency of the reprobate, and cannot have "any regard" to either, except as a part of its own dread consequences : a view of the matter which the supralapsarians would readily admit. How their doctrine, so stated by themselves, could give the Synod any reason to complain, as they do in their conclusion, that they were slandered by their enemies when they were charged with teaching, "that God, by the bare and mere determination of his will, without any respect of the sin of *any* man, predestinated and created the greatest part of the world to eternal damnation," will not be very obvious ; or why they should startle at the same doctrine in one dress which they themselves have but clothed in another. The fact is, that the divisions in the Synod obliged the leading members, who were chiefly stout supralapsarians, to qualify their doctrine somewhat *in words*, whilst substantially it remained the same ; but what they lost by giving up a few words in one place, they secured by retaining them in another, or by resorting to subtilities not obvious to the commonalty. Of this subtilty, the apparent disclaimer just quoted is in proof. When they seem to deny that God reprobates without any respect to the sin of *any* man, they may mean that he had respect to the sin of Adam, or to sin in Adam ; for they do not deny that they reject *personal* sin as a ground of reprobation. Even when they appear to allow that God had, in reprobation, respect to the corruption of human nature, or even to personal transgression, they never confess that God had respect to sin, in either sense, as the *impulsive* or meritorious cause of reprobation. But the greatest subtilty remains behind ; for the Synod says nothing, in this complaint and apparent rejection of the doctrine charged upon them by their adversaries, but what all the supralapsarian divines would say. These, as we have seen, make a distinction between the two parts of the decree of reprobation,—PRETERITION and PREDAMNATION, the latter of which, must always have respect to actual sin ; and hence arises their distinction between "*destruction*" and "*damnation*." For they say, it is one thing to predestinate and create to *damnation*, and another to predestinate and create to *destruction*. Damnation, being the sentence of a judge, must be passed in consideration of sin ; but destruction may be the act of a *sovereign*, and so inflicted by

right of dominion. (3) The Synod would have disallowed something substantial, had they denied that God created any man to *destruction*, without respect to sin, and were safe enough in allowing that he has created none, without respect to sin, unto *damnation*. But among the errors on predestination, which they formally “reject,” and which they place under nine distinct heads, thus attempting to guard the pure and orthodox doctrine as to this point on the right hand and on the left, they are careful not to condemn the supralapsarian doctrine, or to place even its highest branches among the doctrines disavowed.

The doctrine of the church of Scotland, on these topics, is expressed in the answers to the 12th and 13th questions of its large catechism : “God’s decrees are the wise, free, and holy acts of the counsel of his will ; whereby, from all eternity, he hath, for his own glory, unchangeably foreordained whatsoever comes to pass in time, especially concerning angels and men”—“God, by an eternal and immutable decree, out of his mere love, for the praise of his glorious grace to be manifested in due time, hath elected *some angels* to glory ; and, in Christ, hath chosen *some men* to eternal life and the *means thereof* ; and also, according to his sovereign power and the unsearchable counsel of his own will, (whereby he extendeth or withholdeth favour as he pleaseth,) hath *passed by* and foreordained the rest to dishonour and wrath, to be *for their sin* inflicted, to the praise of the glory of his justice.”

In this general view there appears a strict conformity to the opinions of Calvin, as before given. All things are the subjects of decree and preordination ; election and reprobation are grounded upon the *mere will* of God ; election is the choosing men, not only to salvation, but to the *means* of salvation ; from which the reprobates are therefore excluded, as passed by, and foreordained to wrath ; and yet, though the “means of salvation” are never put within their reach, this wrath is inflicted upon them “*for their sin* :” and to the praise of God’s justice ! The church of Scotland adopts, also, the notion that decrees of election and reprobation extend to *angels* as well as men ; a pretty certain proof, that the framers of this catechism were not supralapsarians, for as to angels, there could be no election *out of* a “common misery ;” and with Calvin, therefore, they choose to refer the whole to the arbitrary pleasure and will of God.—

(3) “Non solent enim supralapsarii dicere Deum quosdam ad æternam *damnationem* creasse et prædestinasse ; eo quod damnatio actum judicalem designet, ac proinde peccati meritum præsupponat ; sed malunt uti voce *exitii*, ad quod Deus, tanquam absolutus Dominus, jus habeat creandi et destinandi quoscunque voluerit.” —Curcellæus *De Jure Dei*, &c, cap. x. See also Bishop WOMACK’s Calvinistic Cabinet, &c, p. 394.



“The angels who stood in their integrity, Paul calls *elect*; if their constancy rested on the Divine pleasure, the defection of others argues their having been forsaken: (direlectos) a fact, for which no other cause can be assigned, than the reprobation hidden in the secret counsel of God.”

The ancient church of the Vaudois, in the valleys of Piedmont, have a confession of faith, bearing date A. D. 1120; and which, probably, transmits the opinions of much more ancient times. The only article which bears upon the extent of the death of Christ is drawn up, as might be expected in an age of the church when it was received, as a matter almost entirely undisputed, that Christ died for the salvation of the whole world. Art. 8. “Christ is our life, truth, peace, and righteousness; also our pastor, advocate, sacrifice, and priest, who died for the salvation of all those that believe, and is risen again for our justification.”

The Confession of Faith, published by the churches of Piedmont in 1655, bears a different character. In the year 1630, a plague which was introduced from France into these valleys, swept off all the ministers but *two*; and with them ended the race of their ancient barbes, or pastors.(4) The Vaudois were then under the necessity of applying to the reformed churches of France and Geneva for a supply of ministers; and with them came in the doctrine of Calvin in an authorized form. It was thus embodied in the Confession of 1655. Art. 11. “God saves from corruption and condemnation those whom he has chosen from the foundation of the world, not for any disposition, faith, or holiness, that he foresaw in them, but of his mere mercy in Jesus Christ his Son: *passing by* all the rest, according to the *irreprehensible reason* of his *free will and justice*.” The last clause is expressed in the very words of Calvin.

The 12th Article in the Confession of the French churches, 1558, is, in substance, Calvinistic, though brief and guarded in expression. “We believe, that out of this general corruption and condemnation in which all men are plunged, God doth deliver them whom he hath, in his eternal and unchangeable counsel; chosen of his mere goodness and mercy, through our Lord Jesus Christ, without any consideration of their works, leaving the rest in their sins and damnable estate, that he may show forth in them his justice, as, in the elect, he doth most illustriously declare the riches of his mercy. For one is not better than another, until such time as God doth make the difference, according to his unchangeable purpose which he hath determined in Jesus Christ before the creation of

(4) See “Historical Defence, &c, of the Waldenses,” by Sims.

the world.”(5) This confession was drawn up by Calvin himself, though not in language so strong as he usually employs; which, perhaps, indicates that the majority of the French pastors were inclined to the sublapsarian theory, and did not, in every point, coincide with their great master.

The Westminster Confession gives the sentiments both of the English Presbyterian churches, and the church of Scotland.(6) Chap. 3 treats of the predestination.

“By the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life, and others foreordained to everlasting death. These angels and men thus predestinated and foreordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed; and *their number is so certain and definite*, that it cannot either be increased or diminished. Those of mankind that are predestinated unto life, God, before the foundation of the world was laid, according to his eternal and immutable purpose and the secret counsel and good pleasure of his will, hath chosen in Christ unto everlasting glory, out of his mere free grace and love, without any foresight of faith and good works, or perseverance in either of them, or any other thing in the creature as conditions or causes moving him thereunto; and all to the praise of his glorious grace. As God hath appointed the elect unto glory, so hath he, by the eternal and most free purpose of his will, foreordained all the means thereunto. Wherefore, they who are elected, being fallen in Adam, are redeemed by Christ; are effectually called unto faith in Christ, by his Spirit working in due season; are justified, adopted, sanctified, and kept by his power through faith unto salvation; neither are *any other redeemed by Christ*, effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved, but the elect only. The rest of mankind God was pleased, *according to the unsearchable counsel of his own will*, whereby he extendeth or withholdeth mercy as he pleaseth, *for the glory of his sovereign power over his creatures, to pass by*, and to ordain them to dishonour and wrath for their sin, to the praise of his glorious justice.”

Here we have no attempts at qualification after the example of the Synod of Dort; but the whole is conformed to the higher and most unmitigated parts of the Institutes of Calvin. By the side of the Presbyterian Confession, the seventeenth article of the Church

(5) QUICK'S "Synodicon in Gallia Reformata."

(6) The title of it is "The Confession of Faith agreed upon by the Assembly of Divines at Westminster, with the assistance of Commissioners from the Church of Scotland." The date of the ordinance for convening this assembly is 1643. The Confession was approved by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in 1647.

of England must appear exceedingly moderate ; and, as to *Calvinistic predestination*, to say the least, equivocal. It never gave satisfaction to the followers of Calvin, who had put his stronger impress upon the Augustinism which floated in the minds of many of the divines of the Reformation, who generally, as appears from the earliest Protestant confessions and catechisms, (7) thought fit to recommend that either these points should not be touched at all, or so speak of them as to admit great latitude of interpretation, and that, probably, in charitable respect to the varying opinions of the theologians and churches of the day. It is of the perfected form of Calvinism that Arminius speaks, when he says, "It neither agrees nor corresponds with the harmony of those confessions which were published together in one volume at Geneva, in the name of the Reformed and Protestant Churches. If that harmony of confessions be faithfully consulted, it will appear, that many of them do not speak in the same manner concerning predestination ; that some of them only incidentally mention it, and that they evidently never once touch upon those heads of the doctrine which are now in great repute, and particularly urged in the preceding scheme of predestination. The confessions of Bohemia, England, and Wirttemberg, and the first Helvetian Confession, and that of the four cities of Strasburgh, Constance, Memmingen, and Lindau, make no mention of this predestination : those of Basle and Saxony only take a very cursory notice of it in three words. The Augustan Confession speaks of it in such a manner as to induce the Genevan editors to think that some annotation was necessary on their part to give us a previous warning. The last of the Helvetian Confessions, to which a great portion of the Reformed Churches have expressed their assent, likewise speaks of it in such a strain as makes me very desirous to see what method can possibly be adopted to give it any accordance with that doctrine of the predestination which I have stated. Without the least contention or cavilling, it may be very properly made a subject of doubt, whether this doctrine agrees with the Belgic Confession and the Heidelberg Catechism." (8)

I have given these extracts to show that nothing in the preceding discussion has been assumed as Calvinism, but what is to be found

(7) The Augsburg Confession says, "Non est hic opus disputationibus de prædestinatione et similibus. Nam promissio est universalis et nihil detrahit operibus, sed exsuscitat ad fidem et verè bona opera." Act 20. And the Saxon Confession is equally indifferent to the subject. "Non addimus hic quæstiones de prædestinatione seu de electione ; sed deducimus omnes lectores ad verbum Dei, et jubemus ut voluntatem Dei verbo ipsius discant sicut Æternus Pater expressa voce præcipit, *hunc audite*." Art. de Remiss. Pecc.

(8) NICHOL'S Works of Arminius, vol. 1, p. 557.



in the writings of the founder of the system, and in the confessions and creeds of churches which professedly admitted his doctrine.

With respect to modifications of this system, the sublapsarian theory has been already considered and shown to be substantially the same as the system which it professes to mitigate and improve. We may now adduce another modified theory; but shall, upon examination, find it but little, if at all, removed out of the reach of those objections which have been stated to the various shades of the predestinating scheme already noticed.

That scheme is in England usually called Baxterianism, from the celebrated BAXTER, who advocated it in his *Treatise of Universal Redemption*, and in his *Methodus Theologiæ*. He was, however, in this theory but the disciple of certain divines of the French Protestant church, whose opinions created many dissensions abroad, and produced so much warmth of opposition from the Calvinistic party, that they were obliged first to engage in the hopeless attempt of softening down the harsher aspects of the doctrine of Calvin and the Synod of Dort, in order to keep themselves in countenance; then to attack the Arminians with asperity, in order to purge themselves of the suspicion of entire heterodoxy in a Calvinistic church; and, finally, to withdraw from the contest. The Calvinism of the church of France was, however, much mitigated in subsequent times by the influence of the writings of these theologians; a result which also has followed in England from the labours of Baxter, who, though he formed no separate school, has had numerous followers in the Calvinistic churches of this country. The real author of the scheme, at least in a systematized form, was CAMERO, who taught divinity at Saumur, and it was unfolded and defended by his disciple Amyraldus, to whom Curcellæus replied in the work from which I have above made some quotations. Baxter says, in his preface to his *Saint's Rest*, "The middle way which Camero, Crocius, Martinius, Amyraldus, Davenant, with all the divines of Britain and Bremen, in the Synod of Dort go, I think is nearest the truth of any that I know who have written on these points." (9) This system he laboured powerfully to defend, and his works on this subject, although his system is often spoken of, being but little known to the general reader, the following exhibition of this scheme, from his work entitled "Universal Redemption," may be acceptable. It makes great concessions to that view of the scriptural doctrine

(9) Of Camero, or Cameron, Amyraldus, Courcelles, and the controversy in which they were engaged, see an interesting account in Nichol's *Arminianism and Calvinism Compared*, vol. 1, appendix c, a work of elaborate research, and abounding with the most curious information as to the opinions and history of those times.

which we have attempted to establish ; but, for want of going another step, it is, perhaps, the most inconsistent theory to which the varied attempts to modify Calvinism have given rise. Baxter first differs from the majority of Calvinists, though not from all, in his statement of the doctrine of satisfaction.

“ Christ’s sufferings were not a *fulfilling* of the *law’s threatening* (though he bore its *curse materially* ;) but a satisfaction for our *not fulfilling the precept*, and to prevent *God’s fulfilling the threatening on us.*”

“ Christ paid not, therefore, the *idem*, but the *tantundem*, or *æquivalens* ; not the *very debt* which we owed and the law required, but the *value* ; (else it were not *strictly satisfaction*, which is *redditio æquivalentis* :) And (it being improperly called the *paying of a debt*, but properly *a suffering for the guilty*) the *idem* is nothing but *supplicium delinquentis*. In *criminals*, *dum alius solvet simul aliud solvitur*. The law knoweth no *vicarius pænæ* ; though the *law maker* may admit it, as he is *above law* ; else there were no place for *pardon*, if the *proper debt* be paid and the *law not relaxed*, but *fulfilled*.”

“ Christ did neither *obey* nor *suffer* in any man’s *stead*, by a *strict, proper representation* of his person in point of law ; so as that the *law* should take it, as done or suffered by the *party himself*. But only as a *third person*, as a *mediator*, he voluntarily bore what else the sinner should have borne.”

“ To assert the contrary (especially as to particular persons considered in actual sin) is to overthrow all Scripture theology, and to introduce all Antinomianism ; to overthrow all possibility of pardon, and assert justification before we sinned or were born, and to make *ourselves* to have satisfied God.

“ Therefore we must not say that *Christ died nostro loco*, so as to *personate us*, or *represent our persons in law sense* ; but only to bear what else we must have borne.”(1)

This system explicitly asserts, that Christ made a satisfaction by his death equally for the sins of every man ; and thus Baxter essentially differs both from the rigid Calvinists, and, also, from the sublapsarians, who, though they may allow that the reprobate derive some benefits from Christ’s death, so that there is a vague sense in which he may be said to have died for all men, yet they, of course, deny to such the benefit of Christ’s satisfaction or atonement which Baxter contends for.

“ Neither the law, whose curse Christ bore, nor God, as the legislator to be satisfied, did distinguish between men as elect and reprobate, or as believers and unbelievers, *de presenti vel de futuro* ;

and to impose upon Christ, or require from him satisfaction for the sins of one sort more than of another, but for mankind in general.

“God the Father, and Christ the Mediator, now dealeth with no man upon the mere rigorous terms of the first law ; (*obey perfectly and live, else thou shalt die* ;) but giveth to all much mercy, which, according to the tenor of that violated law, they could not receive, and calleth them to repentance, in order to their receiving farther mercy offered them. And accordingly he will not judge any at last according to the mere law of works, but as they have obeyed or not obeyed his conditions or terms of grace.

“It was not the *sins* of the *elect only*, but of all *mankind fallen*, which lay upon Christ satisfying. And to assert the contrary, injuriously diminisheth the honour of his sufferings ; and hath other desperate ill consequences.”(2)

The benefits derived to all men *equally*, from the satisfaction of Christ, he thus states,

“All mankind *immediately* upon Christ’s satisfaction, are redeemed and delivered from that legal necessity of perishing which they were under, (not by remitting sin or punishment directly to them, but by giving up God’s *jus puniendi* into the hands of the Redeemer ; nor by giving any right directly to them, but *per meram resultantiam* this happy change is made for them in their relation, upon the said remitting of God’s right and advantage of justice against them,) and they are given up to the Redeemer as their owner and ruler, to be dealt with upon terms of mercy which have a tendency to their recovery.

“God the Father and Christ the Mediator hath freely, without any prerequisite condition on man’s part, enacted a law of grace of universal extent, in regard of its tenor, by which he giveth, as a deed of gift, Christ himself, with all his following benefits which he bestoweth ; (as benefactor and legislator ;) and this to all alike, without excluding any ; upon condition they believe, and accept the offer.

“By this law, testament, or covenant, *all men are conditionally* pardoned, justified, and reconciled to God already, and no man absolutely ; nor doth it make a difference, nor take notice of any till men’s performance or non-performance of the condition makes a difference.

“In the new law Christ hath truly *given himself with a conditional pardon, justification, and conditional right to salvation*, to all men in the world, without exception.”(3)

On the case of the heathen :

(2) Ibid. p. 36, 37, and 50.

(3) Ibid. p. 36, &c.



“Though God hath been pleased less clearly to acquaint us on what terms he dealeth with those that hear not of Christ, yet it being most clear and certain, that he dealeth with them on terms of grace, and not on the terms of the rigorous law of works, this general may evince them to be the mediator’s subjects, and redeemed.

“Though it be very difficult, and not very necessary, to know what is the condition prescribed to them that hear not of Christ, or on what terms Christ will judge them ; yet, to me it seems to be the covenant made with *Adam*, Gen. iii, 15, which they are under, requiring their taking God to be their only God and Redeemer, and to expecting mercy from him and loving him above all, as their end and chief good ; and repenting of sin, and sincere obedience, according to the laws promulgated to them, to lead them farther.

“All those that have not heard of Christ, have yet much mercy which they receive from him, and is the fruit of his death : according to the well or ill using whereof it seems possible that God will judge them.

“It is a course to blind, and not to inform men, to lay the main stress in the doctrine of redemption upon our uncertain conclusions of God’s dealing with such as never heard of Christ, seeing all proof is *per notiora* ; and we must reduce points uncertain to the certain, and not the certain to the uncertain, in our trial.”(4)

In arguments drawn from the consequences which follow the denial of “universal satisfaction,” Baxter is particularly terse and conclusive.

“The doctrine which denieth universal satisfaction hath all these inconveniences and absurd consequents following : therefore it is not of God, nor true.

“It either denieth the universal promise or conditional gift of pardon and life to all men if they will believe, and then it overturneth the substance of Christ’s law and Gospel promise ; or else it maketh God to give conditionally to all men a pardon and salvation which Christ never purchased, and without his dying for men.

“It maketh God either not to offer the effects of Christ’s satisfaction (pardon and life) to all, but only to the elect ; or else to offer that which is not, and which he cannot give.

“It denieth the direct object of faith, and of God’s offer, that is *Christum qui satisfecit*, (a Christ that hath satisfied.)

“It either denieth the non-elect’s deliverance from that flat necessity of perishing, which came on man for sinning against the first law, by its remediless, unsuspended obligation ; (and so neither Christ, Gospel, or mercy, had ever any nature of a remedy to them,

nor any more done towards their deliverance than towards the deliverance of the devils;) or else it maketh this deliverance and remedy to be without satisfaction by Christ for them.

“It either denieth that God commandeth all to believe, (but only the elect;) or else maketh God to assign them a deceiving object for their faith, commanding them to believe in that which never was, and to trust in that which would deceive them if they did trust it.

“It maketh God either to have appointed and commanded the non-elect to use no means at all for their recovery and salvation, or else to have appointed them means which are all utterly useless and insufficient, for want of a prerequisite cause without them; yea, which imply a contradiction.

“It maketh the true and righteous God to make promises of pardon and salvation to all men on condition of believing, which he neither would nor could perform, (for want of such satisfaction to his justice,) if they did believe.

“It denieth the true sufficiency of Christ’s death for the pardoning and saving of all men, if they did believe.

“It makes the cause of men’s damnation to be principally for want of an expiatory sacrifice and of a Saviour, and not of believing.

“It leaveth all the world, elect as well as others, without any ground and object for the first justifying faith, and in an utter uncertainty whether they may believe to justification or not.

“It denieth the most necessary humbling aggravation of men’s sins, so that neither the minister can tell wicked men that they have sinned against him that bought them, nor can any wicked man so accuse himself; no, nor any man that doth not know himself to be elect: they cannot say, my sins put Christ to death, and were the cause of his sufferings: nay, a minister cannot tell any man in the world, certainly, (their sins put Christ to death,) because he is not certain who is elect or sincere in the faith.

“It subverteth Christ’s new dominion and government of the world, and his general legislation and judgment according to his law, which is now founded in his title of redemption, as the first dominion and government was on the title of creation.

“It maketh all the benefits that the non-elect receive, whether spiritual or corporal; and so even the relaxation of the curse of the law, (without which relaxation no man could have such mercies,) to befall men without the satisfaction of Christ; and so either make satisfaction, as to all those mercies, needless, or else must find another satisfier.

“It maketh the law of grace to contain far harder terms than the law of works did in its utmost rigour.

“It maketh the law of *Moses* either to bind all the non-elect still to all ceremonies and bondage ordinances, (and so sets up Judaism,) or else to be abrogated and taken down, and men delivered from it, without Christ’s suffering for them.

“It destroys almost the whole work of the ministry, disabling ministers either to humble men by the chiefest aggravations of their sins, and to convince them of ingratitude and unkind dealing with Christ, or to show them any hopes to draw them to repentance, or any love and mercy tending to salvation to melt and win them to the love of Christ; or any sufficient object for their faith and affiance, or any means to be used for pardon or salvation, or any promise to encourage them to come in, or any threatening to deter them.

“It makes God and the Redeemer to have done no more for the remedying of the misery of most of fallen mankind than for the devils, nor to have put them into any more possibility of pardon or salvation.

“Nay, it makes God to have dealt far hardlier with most men than with the devils; making them a law which requireth their believing in one that never died for them, and taking him for their Redeemer that never redeemed them, and that on the mere foresight that they would not believe it, or decree that they should not; and so to create by that law a necessity of their far sorer punishment, without procuring them any possibility of avoiding it.

“It makes the Gospel of its own nature to be the greatest plague and judgment to most of men that receive it, that ever God sendeth to men on earth, by binding them over to a greater punishment, and aggravating their sin, without giving them any possibility of remedy.

“It maketh the case of all the world, except the elect, as deplorable, remediless, and hopeless, as the case of the damned, and so denieth them to have any day of grace, visitation, or salvation, or any price for happiness put into their hands.

“It maketh Christ to condemn men to hell fire for not receiving him for their Redeemer that never redeemed them, and for not resting on him for salvation by his blood, which was never shed for them, and for not repenting unto life, when they had no hope of mercy, and faith and repentance could not have saved them.

“It putteth sufficient excuses into the mouths of the condemned.

“It maketh the torments of conscience in hell to be none at all, and teacheth the damned to put away all their sorrows and self accusations.

“It denieth all the privative part of those torments which men are obliged to suffer by the obligation of Christ’s law, and so maketh hell either no hell at all, or next to none.



“And I shall anon show how it leads to infidelity and other sins, and, after this, what face of religion is left unsubverted? Not that I charge those that deny universal satisfaction with holding all these abominations; but their doctrine of introducing them by necessary consequence: it is the opinion and not the men that I accuse.”

A thorough Arminian could say nothing stronger than what is asserted in several of the above quotations; and, perhaps, what might not be borne from him, may call attention from Baxter, and happy would it be if every advocate of Calvin’s reprobation would give these “CONSEQUENTS,” a candid consideration.

The peculiarity of Baxter’s scheme will be seen from the following farther extracts; and, after all, it singularly leaves itself open to almost all the objections which he so powerfully urges against Calvinism itself.

“Though Christ *died equally for all men*, in the aforesaid *law sense*, as he satisfied the offended *legislator*, and as giving himself to *all alike* in the *conditional covenant*; yet he NEVER PROPERLY INTENDED OR PURPOSED THE ACTUAL JUSTIFYING AND SAVING OF ALL, NOR OF ANY but those that come to be justified and saved: he did not, therefore, die for all, nor for any that perish, with a decree or resolution to save them, MUCH LESS DID HE DIE FOR ALL ALIKE, AS TO THIS INTENT.

“Christ hath given FAITH to none by his law or testament, though he hath revealed, that to some he will, as benefactor and DOMINUS ABSOLUTUS, give that grace which shall infallibly produce it; and God hath given some to Christ that he might prevail with them accordingly; yet this is no giving *it to the person*, nor hath he in himself ever the more title to it, nor can any lay claim to it as their due.

“It belongeth not to Christ as *satisfier*, nor yet as *legislator*, to make wicked refusers to become willing, and receive him and the benefits which he offers; therefore he may do all for them that is fore expressed, though he cure not their unbelief.

“Faith is a fruit of the death of Christ, (and so is all the good which we do enjoy,) but not *directly*, as it is *satisfaction to justice*; but only *remotely*, as it proceedeth from that JUS DOMINII which Christ has received to send the Spirit in what measure and to WHOM HE WILL, and to succeed it accordingly; and as it is necessary to the attainment of the farther ends of his death in the certain gathering and saving of THE ELECT.”(5)

Thus, then, the whole theory comes to this, that, although a *conditional salvation* has been purchased by Christ for all men, and is

(5) Ibid. p. 63, &c.

offered to them, and all legal difficulties are removed out of the way of their pardon as sinners by the atonement, yet Christ hath not purchased for any man the gift of FAITH, *or the power of performing the condition of salvation required* ; but gives this to some, and does not give it to others, by virtue of that *absolute dominion* over men which he has purchased for himself ; so that, in fact, the old scheme of election and reprobation still comes in, only with this difference, that the Calvinists refer that decree to the sovereignty of the *Father*, Baxter to the sovereignty of the *Son* ; one makes the decree of reprobation to issue from the Creator and Judge ; the other, (which is indeed the more repulsive view,) from the Redeemer himself, who has purchased even those to whom he denies the gift of faith with his own most precious blood. This is plain from the following quotation :

“God did not give Christ faith for his blood shed in exchange ; the thing that God was to give the Son for his satisfaction, was dominion and rule of the redeemed creature, and power therein to use what means he saw fit for the bringing in of souls to himself, even to send forth *so much of his word and Spirit as he pleased* ; both the Father and Son resolving, from eternity, to prevail infallibly *with all the elect* ; but never did Christ desire at his Father’s hands that all whom he satisfied for, should be infallibly and irresistibly brought to believe, nor did God ever grant or promise any such thing. Jesus Christ, as a ransom, died for all, and as *Rector per leges*, or legislator, he hath conveyed the fruits of his death to all, that is, those fruits which it appertained to him as legislator to convey, which is right to what his new law or covenant doth promise ; but those mercies which he gives as *Dominus absolutus*, arbitrarily besides or above his engagement, he neither gives nor ever intended to give to all that he died for.”(6)

The only quibble which prevents the real aspect of this scheme from being at first seen, is, that Baxter, and the divines of this school, give to the elect irresistible effectual grace ; but contend, that others have *sufficient grace*. This kind of grace is called, aptly enough, by Baxter himself, “sufficient *ineffectual* grace ;” and that it is worthy the appellation, his own account of it will show.

“I say it again, confidently, all men that perish (who have the use of reason) do perish directly, for rejecting sufficient recovering grace. By grace, I mean mercy contrary to merit : by recovering, I mean such as TENDETH in its own nature towards their recovery, and leadeth or helpeth them thereto. By sufficient, I mean, NOT SUFFICIENT DIRECTLY TO SAVE THEM ; (for such none of the

elect have till they are saved;) NOR YET SUFFICIENT TO GIVE THEM FAITH OR CAUSE THEM SAVINGLY TO BELIEVE. But it is sufficient to bring them NEARER Christ than they are, though not to put them into immediate possession of Christ by union with him, as faith would do. It is an easy truth, that all men naturally are far from Christ, and that some, by custom in sinning, for want of informing and restraining means, are much farther from him than others, (as the heathens are,) and that it is not God's usual way (nor to be expected) to bring these men to Christ at once, by one act, or without any preparation, or first bringing them nearer to him. It is a similitude used by some that oppose what I now say: suppose a man in a lower room should go no more steps than he in the middle room, he must go many steps before he came to be as near you as the other is. Now, suppose you offer to take them by the hand when they come to the upper stairs, and give them some other sufficient help to come up the lower steps: if these men will not use the help given them to ascend the first steps, (though entreated,) who can be blamed but themselves if they came not to the top? It is not your fault but theirs, that they have not your hand to lift them up at the last step. So is our present case. Worldlings, and sensual ignorant sinners, have many steps to ascend before they come to justifying faith: and heathens have many steps before they come as far as ungodly Christians, (as might easily be manifested by enumeration of several necessary particulars.) Now, if these will not use that sufficient help that Christ gives them to come the first, or second, or third step, who is it long of that they have not faith?"(7)

But we have no reason to conclude, from this system, that if they took the steps required, it would bring them "nearer to Christ than they are," or, at least, bring them up to SAVING FAITH, which is the great point, since Mr. Baxter's own doctrine is, that Christ "never properly intended or purposed the actual justifying, and saving of all, and did not, therefore, die for all, nor for any that perish, *with a design or resolution to save them*, much less did he die for all, *as to this intent*." Those, then, for whom Christ died, not with *intent* to give saving faith, cannot be saved; yet we are told, that to these sufficient grace is given, to take a step or two which would bring them "nearer to Christ." Suppose such persons, then, to take these steps, yet, as Christ died not for them, with *intent* to give them saving faith, without this intent, they cannot have saving faith, since it is not a part of Christ's *purchase*, but his arbitrary *gift*. The truth then is, that their salvation is as impossible as that



of the reprobates under the supralapsarian scheme, and the reason of their doom is no act of their own, but an act of Christ himself, who, as "absolute Lord," denies that to them which is necessary to their salvation.

It is, however, but fair that Mr. Baxter should himself answer this objection.

"*Objection.*—Then, they that come not the first step are excusable; for, if they had come to the step next believing, they had no assurance that Christ would have given them faith.

"*Answer.*—No such matter: For though they had no assurance, they had both God's command to seek more grace, and sufficient encouragement thereto; they had such as Mr. Cotton calls HALF PROMISES, that is, a discovery of a possibility, and high degree of PROBABILITY of obtaining; as *Peter to Simon*, pray, if *perhaps* the thoughts of thy heart may be forgiven. They may think God will not appoint men vain means, and he hath appointed some means to all men to get more grace, and bring them nearer Christ than they are. Yea, no man can name that man since the world was made, that did his best in the use of these means, and lost his labour. So that if all men have not faith, it is their own fault; not only as originally sinners, but as rejecting sufficient grace to have brought them nearer Christ than they were; for which it is that they justly perish, as is more fully opened in the dispute of sufficient grace."

One argument from Scripture demolishes this whole scheme. Mr. Baxter makes the condemnation of men to rest upon their not coming "*nearer to Christ*" than they are in their natural state; but the Scripture places their guilt in not *fully* "coming to him;" or, in other words, in their not believing in Christ "to salvation," since it has made faith their duty, and has connected salvation with faith. That they must take previous steps, such as consideration and repentance, is true, and that they are guilty for not taking them; but then their guilt arises from their rejection of a strength and grace to consider and repent which is imparted to them, *in order to lead them, through this process, to saving faith itself*; and they are condemned for not having this faith, because not only the preparatory steps, but *the faith itself* is put within their reach, or they could not be condemned for *unbelief*. If Baxter really meant that any steps these non-elect persons could take, would actually put them into possession of saving faith, he would have said so in so many plain words, and then, between him and the Arminians there would have been no difference, so far as they who perish are concerned. But coming nearer to Christ, and nearer to saving faith are with him quite distinct. His concern was not to show how the non-elect

might be saved; but how they might with some plausibility be damned.

“What then,” says Dr. Womack, “is the universal redemption you or they speak of? Doth it consist in the *ablation* of the curse or pain, the *impetration* of grace and righteousness, and the *collation* of life and glory? Man’s *misery* consists but of *two* parts, *sin* and *punishment*. Doth your *universal* redemption make sufficient provision to *free* the non-elect from *both*, or from *either* of these? From the *wrath* to come, the *damnation* of hell, or from *iniquity* and their *vain conversation*? Indeed, in your assize sermons, you did very seasonably preach up Christ to be a *Lord Chief Justice* to judge the reprobate; but I cannot find that ever you declare *him* to be their *Lord Keeper*, or their *Lord Treasurer*, to communicate his *saving* grace for their conversion, or to secure them against the *assaults* and rage of their ghostly enemy. These last offices you suppose him to bear in favour of the elect only, so that your *universal* redemption holds a very fair correspondence with your *sufficient* grace, (as to the non-elect,)—there is not *one* single person sanctified by *this*, or saved by *that*.” (8)

The remark of Curcellæus on the same system as delivered by Amyraldus, is conclusive.

“Besides, since faith is necessary, in order to make us partakers of the benefits which are procured by the death of Christ, and since no one can obtain it by his natural powers, (for it is imparted through a special gift, from which God, by an absolute decree, has excluded the greatest portion of mankind,) of what avail is it that Christ has died for *those to whom faith is denied*? Does not the affair revert to the same point, as if he had never entertained an intention of *redeeming them*?” (9)

This cannot consistently be denied. Mr. Baxter, indeed, says, that “none can name the man since the world was made, that did his best in the use of the means to obtain more grace, and lost his labour.” So we believe, but this helps not Mr. Baxter. One of his main principles is, that there is a class of men to whom Christ has resolved to give saving faith; to the rest he has resolved not to give it. The man, then, who seeks more than common grace, and obtains saving grace, is either in the class to whom Christ has resolved, by right of dominion, to give saving grace, or he is not. If the former, then he is one of the elect, and so the instance given proves nothing as to the case of the non-elect; but, if he be of the latter class, then one of those to whom Christ never resolved to give saving grace, by some means obtains it,—how, it will be difficult to

say. In fact, it was never allowed by Mr. Baxter or his followers, that any but the elect would be saved.

The remarks of a Calvinist upon the "middle scheme" of the French divines, the same in substance as that which was afterwards advocated by Baxter, may properly close our remarks.

"This mitigated view of the doctrine of predestination has *only one defect*; but it is a *capital one*. It represents God as *desiring* a thing (that is salvation and happiness) for *ALL*, which, in order to its attainment, requires a degree of his assistance and succour, which he refuseth to *MANY*. This rendered grace and redemption *UNIVERSAL* only in *words*, but *PARTIAL* in *reality*; and, therefore, did not at all mend the matter. The supralapsarians were consistent with themselves; but their doctrine was harsh and terrible, and was founded on the most unworthy notions of the Supreme Being; and, on the other hand, the system of Amyraut was full of inconsistencies: nay, even the sublapsarian doctrine has its difficulties, and rather palliates than removes the horrors of supralapsarianism. What, then, is to be done? From what quarter shall the candid and well-disposed Christian receive that solid satisfaction and wise direction which neither of these systems is adapted to administer? These he will receive by turning his dazzled and feeble eye from the secret decrees of God, which were neither designed to be rules of action, nor sources of comfort to mortals here below; and, by fixing his view upon the mercy of God, as it is manifested through Christ, the pure laws and sublime promises of his Gospel, and the equity of his present government and future tribunal." (1)

The theory to which the name of Baxter has given some weight in this country, has been introduced more at length, because with it stands or falls every system of moderated or modified Calvinism, which by more modern writers has been advocated. The scheme of Dr. Williams, of Rotherham, is little beside the old theory of supralapsarian reprobation, in its twofold enunciation of *PRETERITION*, by which God refuses help to a creature which cannot stand without help, and his consequent *DAMNATION* for the crimes committed in consequence of this withholding of supernatural aid. The dress is altered, and the system has a *dash* of Cameronism, but it is in substance the same. All other mitigated schemes rest on two principles, the sufficiency of the atonement for all mankind, and the sufficiency of grace to those who believe not. For the first, it is enough to say, that the Synod of Dort and the higher Calvinistic school will agree with them upon this point, and so nothing is gained; for the second, that the sufficiency of grace in these



schemes is always understood in Baxter's sense, and is mere verbiage. It is not "the grace of God WHICH BRINGETH SALVATION;" for no man is actually saved without something more than this "sufficient grace" provides. That which is contended for, is, in fact, not a sufficiency of grace in order to salvation; but, in order to justify the condemnation which inevitably follows. For this alone the struggle is made, but without success. The main characteristic of all these theories, from the first to the last, from the highest to the lowest is, that a part of mankind are shut out from the mercies of God, on some ground irrespective of their refusal of a sincere offer to them of salvation through Christ, made with a communicated power of embracing it. Some power they allow to the reprobate, as natural power, and degrees of superadded moral power; but in no case the power to believe unto salvation; and thus, as one well observes, "when they have cut some fair trenches, as if they would bring the water of life unto the dwellings of the reprobate, on a sudden they open a sluice which carries it off again." The whole labour of these theories is to find out some decent pretext for the infliction of punishment on them that perish, independent of the only reason given by Scripture, their rejection of a mercy free for all.

Having exhibited the Calvinistic system on its own authorities, it may be naturally asked from what mode or basis of thinking a scheme could arise so much at variance with the Scriptures, and with all received notions of just and benevolent administration among men; properties of government, which must be found more perfectly in the government of God, by reason of the perfection of its author, than in any other. That it had its source in a course of induction from the sacred Scriptures, though erroneous, is not probable; for, if it had been left to that test, it is pretty certain it would not have maintained itself. It appears rather to have arisen from metaphysical hypotheses and school subtilities, to which the sense of Scripture has been accommodated, often very violently; and by subtilities of this kind, it has, at all times, been chiefly supported.

It has, for instance, been assumed by the advocates of this theological theory, that all things which come to pass have been fixed by ETERNAL DECREES; and that as many men actually perish, it must, therefore, have been decreed that they should perish: and, consistently with such a scheme, it became necessary to exclude a part of the human race from all share in the benefits of Christ's redemption. The argument employed to confirm the premises, is, "that it is agreeable to reason and to the analogy of nature, that God should conduct all things according to a deliberate and fixed

plan, independent of his creatures, rather than that he should be influenced, even in his purposes, by the foresight of their capricious conduct.”(2) “It is not easy to reconcile the immutability and efficacy of the Divine counsel which enters into our conceptions of the first cause, with a purpose to save all, suspended upon a condition which is not fulfilled with regard to many.”(3) This has, indeed, all along been the main stress of the argument for absolute decrees, that a conditional decree reflects dishonour upon the Divine attributes, “by leaving God, as it were, in suspense, and waiting to see what men will do, before he passes a firm and irrevocable decree ;” which, as they say, seems to imply want of power and prescience in God, and to be inconsistent with other of his Divine perfections. They especially think, that this is irreconcilable with the immutability of God, and that to subject his decrees to the changes of a countless number of mutable beings, must render him the most mutable being in the universe.

The whole of this objection, however, seems to involve a *petitio principii*. It is taken for granted, either that the decrees of God are absolute appointments from eternity, and then any change of his decrees, dependent upon the acts of creatures, would be a contradiction ; or else, that the acts of creatures being free, it follows, that God had from eternity no plan, and conducts his own government only as circumstances may arise. But, that either the decrees of God are fixed and absolute, or, that God can have no plan of government if that be denied, is the very alternative to be proved, the matter which is in debate. It becomes necessary, therefore, in order to ascertain the truth, to fix the sense of the favourite term “decrees,” and for this we have no sound guide but the Holy Scriptures, which, as to what relates to man’s salvation at least, contain the only exposition of the purposes of God.

The term “decree” is no where in Scripture used in the sense in which it is taken in the theology of the Calvinists. It is properly a legislative or judicial term, importing the solemn decision of a court, and was adopted into that system, probably, because of the absolute meaning it conveys, which quality of absoluteness is, in fact, the point debated. The “*purpose*” and “*counsel*” of God are the scriptural terms applicable to this subject ; one of which, “*counsel*,” expresses an act of wisdom, and the other, necessarily implies it, as it is the “*purpose*,” design, or determination of a Being of infinite perfection, who can purpose, design, will, and determine nothing but under the direction of his intelligence, and the regulation of his moral attributes.

(2) Dr. RANKIN’S Institutes.

(3) Dr. HILL’S Lectures.

Terms are not indeed to be objected to merely because they are not found in the word of God; but their signification must be controlled by it, otherwise, as in the case of the term decrees, a meaning is often silently brought in under covert of the term, which becomes a postulate in argument: a practice which has been a fruitful source of misapprehension and error. The decrees of God, if the phrase then must be continued, can only scripturally signify the determinations of his will in his government of the world he has made; and those determinations are plainly, in Scripture, referred to two classes, what he has himself *determined to do*, and what he has *determined to permit* to be done by free and accountable creatures. He determined, for instance, to create man, and he determined to permit his fall; he determined also the only method of dispensing pardon to the guilty, but he determined to permit men to reject it and to fall into the punishment of their offences. Calvin, indeed, rejects the doctrine of permission. "It is not probable," he says, "that man procured his own destruction by the mere *permission*, and without any *appointment* of God." He had reason for this; for to have allowed this distinction would have been contrary to the main principles of his theological system, which are, that "the will of God is the *necessity* of things," and that all things are previously fixed by an absolute decree; so that they must happen. The consequence is, that he and his followers involve themselves in the tremendous consequence of making God the author of sin; which, after all their disavowals, and we grant them sincere, will still logically cleave to them: for it is obvious, that by nothing can we fairly avoid this consequence but by allowing the distinction between determinations to *do*, on the part of God, and determinations to *PERMIT* certain things to be done by others. The principle laid down by Calvin is destructive of all human agency, seeing it converts man into a mere *instrument*; whilst the other maintains his *agency* in its proper sense, and, therefore, his proper accountability. On Calvin's principle, man is no more an agent than the knife in the hand of the assassin; and he is not more responsible, therefore, in equity, to punishment, than the knife by which the assassination is committed, were it capable of being punished. For if man has not a real agency, that is, if there is a necessity above him so controlling his actions as to render it impossible that they should have been otherwise, he is in the hands of another, and not master of himself, and so his actions cease to be his own.

A decree to permit involves no such consequences. This is indeed acknowledged; but then, on the other hand, it is urged that this



imposes an uncertainty upon the Divine plans, and makes him dependent upon the acts of the creature. In neither of these allegations is there any weight ; for as to the first, there can be no uncertainty in the principles of the administration of a Being who regulates the whole by the immutable rules of righteousness, holiness, truth, and goodness ; so that all the acts of the creature do but call forth some new illustration of his unchangeable regard to these principles. Nor can any act of a creature render his plans uncertain by coming upon him by surprise, and thus oblige him to alter his intentions on the spur of the moment. What the creature will do, in fact, is known beforehand with a perfect prescience, which yet, as we have already proved, (4) interferes not with the liberty of our actions ; and what God has determined to do in consequence, is made apparent by what he actually does, which with him can be no new, no sudden thought, but known and purposed from eternity, in the view of the actual circumstances. As to the second objection, that this makes his conduct dependent upon the acts of the creature, so far from denying it, we may affirm it to be one of the plainest doctrines of the word of God. He punishes or blesses men according to their conduct ; and he waits until the acts of their sin or their obedience take place, before he either punishes or rewards. The dealings of a sovereign judge must, in the nature of things themselves, be dependent upon the conduct of the subjects over whom he rules : they must vary according to that conduct ; and it is only in the principles of a righteous government that we ought to look, for that kind of immutability which has any thing in it of moral character. Still it is said, that though the acts of God, as a sovereign, change, and are, apparently, dependent upon the conduct of creatures, yet that he, from all eternity, decreed, or determined to do them : as for instance, to exalt one nation and to abase another ; to favour this individual, or to punish that ; to save this man, to destroy the other. This may be granted ; but only in this sense, that his eternal determination or decree was as dependent and consequent upon his prescience of the acts which, according to the immutable principles of his nature and government, are pleasing or hateful to him, as the actual administration of favour or punishment is upon the actual conduct of men in time. This brings on the question of decrees *absolute* or *conditional* ; and we are, happily, not left to the reasonings of men on this point ; but have the light of the word of God, which abounds with examples of *decrees*, to which *conditions* are annexed, on the performance or neglect of which, by his creatures, their execution is made dependent. "If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted ? but if thou doest not

well, sin lieth at the door." If this was God's eternal decree concerning Cain, then it was plainly conditional from eternity ; for his decrees in time cannot contradict his decrees from eternity, as to the same persons and events. But Cain did "not well;" was it not, then, says a Calvinist, eternally and absolutely decreed that he should not "do well?" The reply is no ; because this supposed absolute decree of the Calvinist would contradict the revealed decree or determination of God, to put both the doing well and the doing ill into Cain's own power, which is utterly inconsistent with an absolute decree that he should have it in his power only to do ill ; and the inevitable conclusion, therefore, is, that the only eternal decree, or Divine determination concerning Cain in this matter was, that he should be conditionally accepted, or conditionally left to the punishment of his sins. To this class of conditional decrees belong also all such passages, as "If ye be willing and obedient ye shall eat the good of the land ; but if ye refuse and rebel ye shall be devoured by the sword." "If ye live after the flesh ye shall die ; but if ye, through the Spirit, do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." "He that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned." This last, especially, is God's decree or determination, as to all who hear the Gospel, to the end of time. It professes to be so on the very face of it, for its general and unrestricted nature cannot be denied ; but if we are told, that there is a decree affecting numbers of men as individuals, by which God determined absolutely to pass them by, and to deny to them the grace of faith, such an allegation cannot be true ; because it contradicts the decree as revealed by God himself. His decree gives to all who hear the news of Christ's salvation, the alternative of believing and being saved, of not believing and being damned ; but there is no alternative in the absolute decree of Calvinism : as to the reprobate, no one can believe and be saved who is under such decree ; God never intended he should ; and, therefore, he is put by one decree in one condition, and by another decree in an entirely opposite condition, which is an obvious contradiction.

But we have instances of the revocation of God's decrees, as well as of their conditional character, one of which will be sufficient for illustration. In the case of Eli, "I said indeed that thy house and the house of thy father should walk before me for ever ; but now the Lord saith, be it far from me ; for them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed." No passage can more strongly refute the Calvinistic notion of God's immutability, which they seem to place in his never changing his purpose, whereas, in fact, the scriptural doctrine is, that it consists

in his never changing the *principles* of his administration. One of those principles is laid down in this passage. It is, "them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed." To this principle God is immutably true; but it was his unchangeable regard to that very principle which brought on the change of his conduct towards the house of Eli, and induced him to revoke his former promise. This is the only immutability worthy of God, or which can be reconciled to the facts of his government. For either the advocate of absolute predestination must say that the promises and threatenings are declarations of his will and purposes, or they are not. If they are not, they contradict his truth; but if the point, that they do in fact declare his will is conceded, that will is either absolute or conditional. Let us then try the case of Eli by this alternative. If the promise of continuing the priesthood in the family of Eli were absolute, then it could not be revoked. If the threatening expressed an absolute and eternal will and determination to divert the priesthood from Eli's progeny, then the promise was a mockery; and God is in this, and all similar instances, made to engage himself to do what is contrary to his absolute intention and determination: in other words, he makes no engagement in fact, whilst he seems to do it in form, which involves a charge against the Divine Being which few Calvinists would be bold enough to maintain. But if these declarations to Eli be regarded as the expressions of a determination always taken, in the mind of God, under the conditions implied in the fixed principles of his government, then the language and the acts of God harmonize with his sincerity and faithfulness, and, instead of throwing a shade over his moral attributes, illustrate his immutable regard to those wise, equitable, and holy rules by which he conducts his government of moral agents. Nor will the distinction which some Calvinists have endeavoured to establish between the promises and threatenings of God and his decrees, serve them; for where is it to be found except in their own imagination? We have no intimation of such a distinction in Scripture, which, nevertheless, professes to reveal the eternal "*purpose*" and "*counsel*" of God on those matters to which his promises and threatenings relate,—the salvation or destruction of men. That counsel and purpose has, also, no manifestation in his word, but by promises and threatenings; these make up its whole substance, and, therefore, in order to make their distinction good, those who hold it must discover a distinction not only between God's promises and threatenings and his decrees; but between the eternal "*counsels and purposes*" of God and his decrees, which they acknowledge to be identical.



The fallacy which seems to mislead them appears to be the following: They allege that of two consequences, say the obedience or disobedience of Eli's house, we acknowledge, on both sides, that one will happen. That which actually happens we also see taken up into the course of the Divine administration, and made a part of his subsequent plan of government, as the transfer of the priesthood from the house of Eli: they, therefore, argue that the Divine Being having his plan before him, and this very circumstance entering into it, it was fixed from eternity as a part of that general scheme by which the purposes of God were to be accomplished, and which would have been uncertain and unarranged but for this preordination. The answer to this is,

1. That the circumstance of an event being taken up into the Divine administration, and being made use of to work out God's purposes, is no proof that he willed and decreed it. He could not will the wickedness of Eli's sons, and could not, therefore, ordain and appoint it, or his decrees would be contrary to his will. The making use of the result of the choice of a free agent only proves that it was foreseen, and that there are, so to speak, infinite resources in the Divine mind to turn the actions of men into the accomplishment of his plans, without either willing them when they are evil, or imposing fetters upon their freedom.

2. That though an event be interwoven with the course of the Divine government, it does not follow that it was necessary to it. The ends of a course of administration might have been otherwise accomplished; as, in the case before us, if Eli's house had remained faithful, and the family of Zadok had not been chosen in its stead. The general plan of God's government does not, therefore, necessarily include every event which happens as a necessary part of its accomplishment, since the same results might, in many cases, have been brought out of other events; and, therefore, it cannot be conclusively argued, that as God wills the accomplishment of the general plan, he must will in the same manner the particular events which he may overrule to contribute to it. But,

3. As to the general plan, it is also an unfounded assumption, that it was the subject of an absolute determination. From this has arisen the notion that the fall of Adam was willed and decreed by God. To this doctrine, which, for the sake of a metaphysical speculation, draws after it so many abhorrent and antisciptural consequences, we must demur. God could not will that event actively without willing sin; he could not absolutely decree it without removing all responsibility, and, therefore, all fault, from the first offender. If God be holy he could not will Adam's offence,

though he might determine not to prevent it by interfering with man's freedom, which is a very different case ; and if in guarding his law from violation by a severe sanction he proceeded with sincerity, he could not *appoint* its violation. We may confidently say, that he willed the contrary of Adam's offence ; and that he used all means, consistent with his determination to give and maintain free agency to his creatures, to secure the accomplishment of that will. It was against his will, therefore, that our progenitors sinned and fell ; and his "purpose" and "counsel," or his *decree*, if the term please better, to govern the world according to the principles and mode now in operation, was *dependent* upon an event which he willed not ; but which, as being foreseen, was the plan he, in wisdom, justice, and mercy, adopted in the view of this contingency. And suppose we were to acknowledge with some, that the result will be more glorious to him, and more beneficial to the universe, through the wisdom with which he overrules all things, than if Adam and his descendants had stood in their innocency, it will not follow, even from this, that the present was that order of events which God absolutely ordered and decreed. We are told, indeed, that if this was the best of possible plans, God was, by the perfection of his nature, bound to choose it ; and that if he chose it, his will, in this respect, made all the rest necessary. But, to say nothing of the presumption of determining what God was bound to do in any hypothetic case, the position that God must choose the best of possible plans is to be taken with qualification. We can neither prove that the state of things which shall actually issue is the best among those possible ; nor that among possible systems there can be a *best*, since they are all composed of created things, and no system can actually exist, to which the Creator, who is infinite in power, could not add something. We're no sin involved in the case it would be clearer ; but it is not only unsupported by any declaration of Scripture, but certainly contrary to many of its principles, to assume that God originally, so to speak, and, in the first instance, willed and decreed a state of things which should *necessarily* include the introduction of moral evil into his creation, in order to manifest his glory and work out future good to the creature ; because we know that sin is that "abominable thing" which he hateth. A monarch is surely not bound secretly to appoint and *decree* the circumstances which must necessarily lead to a rebellion, in order that his clemency may be more fully manifested in pardoning the rebels, or the strength of his government displayed in their subjugation ; although his subjects, upon the whole, might derive some higher benefit. We may, therefore, conclude that

4 God willed with perfect truth and sincerity that man should not fall, although he resolved not to prevent that fall by interfering with his freedom, which would have changed the whole character of his government towards rational creatures; and that his plan, or decree, to govern the world upon the principle of redemption and mediation was no *absolute* ordination, but *conditional* upon man's offence; and was an "eternal purpose," only in the eternal foresight of the actual occurrence of the fall of man, which yet, it is no contradiction to say, was against his will.

So fallacious are all such notions as to God's fixed plans. Fixed they may be, without being absolutely decreed; because fixed, in reference to what takes place, even in opposition to his will and intention; and as to the argument drawn by Calvinists from the perfections of God, it is surely a more honourable view of him to suppose that his *will* and his promulgated *law* accord and consent, than that they are in opposition to each other; more honourable to him, that he is immutable in his adherence to the *principles*, rather than in the *acts* of government; more honourable to him, that he can make the conduct of his free creatures to work out either his original purposes, or purposes more glorious to himself and beneficial to the universe, than that he should frame plans so fixed as to have no reference to the free actions of creatures, whom, by a strange contradiction, he is represented as still holding accountable for their conduct; plans which all these creatures shall be necessitated to fulfil, so as to be capable of no other course of action whatever, or else that his government must become loose and uncertain. This is, indeed, to have low thoughts, even of the infinite wisdom of God; and either involves his justice and truth in deep obscurity, or presents them to us under very equivocal aspects. Which of these views is the most consonant with the Bible, may be safely left with the candid reader.

The PRESCIENCE OF GOD is also a subject by which Calvinists have endeavoured to give some plausibility to their system. The argument, as popularly stated, has been, that, as the destruction or salvation of every individual is foreseen, it is, therefore, certain, and, as *certain*, it is *inevitable* and *necessary*. The answer to this is, that certainty and necessity are not at all connected in the nature of things, and are, in fact, two perfectly distinct predicaments. *Certainty* has no relation to an event at all as evitable or inevitable, free or compelled, contingent or necessary. It relates only to the issue itself, the act of any agent, not to the quality of the act or event with reference to the circumstances under which it is produced. A free action is as much an event as a necessitated one,



and, therefore, is as truly an object of foresight, which foresight cannot change the nature of the action, or of the process through which it issues, because the simple knowledge of an action, whether present, past, or to come, has no influence upon it of any kind. *Certainty* is, in fact, no quality of an action at all; it exists, properly speaking, in the mind foreseeing, and not in the action foreseen; but freedom or constraint, contingency or necessity qualify the action itself, and determine its nature, and the rewardableness, or punitive demerit of the agent. When, therefore, it is said, that what God foresees will *certainly* happen, nothing more can be reasonably meant, than that HE is certain that it will happen; so that we must not transfer the certainty from God to the action itself, in the false sense of necessity, or, indeed, in any sense; for the certainty is in the Divine mind, and stands there opposed, not to the contingency of the action, but to doubtfulness as to his own prescience of the result. There is this certainty in the Divine mind as to the actions of men, that they *will* happen: but that they *must* happen cannot follow from this circumstance. If they must happen, they are under some control which prevents a different result; but the most certain knowledge has nothing in it which, from its nature, can control an action in any way, unless it should lead the being endowed with it to adopt measures to influence the action, and then it becomes a question, not of foreknowledge, but of *power* and *influence*, which wholly changes the case. This is a sufficient reply to the popular manner of stating the argument. The scholastic method requires a little more illustration.

The knowledge of *possible* things, as existing from all eternity in the Divine understanding, has been termed "*scientia simplicis intelligentiæ*," or by the schoolmen, "*scientia indefinita*," as not determining the existence of any thing. The knowledge which God had of all real existences is termed "*scientia visionis*," and by the schoolmen, "*scientia definita*," because the existence of all objects of this knowledge is determinate and certain. To these distinctions another was added by those who rejected the predestinarian hypothesis, to which they gave the name "*scientia media*," as being supposed to stand in the middle between the two former. By this is understood, the knowledge, neither of things as possible, nor of events appointed and decreed by God; but of events which are to happen upon certain conditions. (5)

(5) "Ordo autem hic ut recte intelligi possit, observandum est triplicem Deo scientiam tribui solere: unam *necessariam*, quæ omnem voluntatis liberæ actum naturæ ordine antecedit, quæ etiam *practica et simplicis intelligentiæ* dici potest, qua seipsum et aliâ omnia possibilia intelligit. Alteram *liberam*, quæ consequitur

The third kind of knowledge, or *scientia media*, might very well be included in the second, since *scientia visionis* ought to include not what God will do, and what his creatures will do under his appointment, but what they will do by his permission as free agents, and what he will do, as a consequence of this, in his character of Governor and Lord. But since the predestinarians had confounded *scientia visionis* with a predestinating decree, the *scientia media* well expressed what they had left quite unaccounted for, and which they had assumed did not really exist,—the actions of creatures endowed with free will, and the acts of Deity which from eternity were consequent upon them. If such actions do not take place, then men are not free; and if the rectoral acts of God are not consequent upon the actions of the creature in the *order* of the Divine intention, and the conduct of the creature is consequent upon the foreordained rectoral acts of God, then we reach a necessitating eternal decree, which, in fact, the predestinarian contends for: but it unfortunately brings after it consequences which no subtilties have ever been able to shake off,—that the only ACTOR in the universe is God himself; and that the only distinction among events is, that one class is brought to pass by God directly, and the other indirectly; not by the *agency*, but by the mere *instrumentality* of his creatures.

The manner in which absolute predestination is made identical with *scientia visionis*, will be best illustrated by an extract from the writings of a tolerably fair and temperate modern Calvinist. Speaking of the two distinctions, *scientia simplicis intelligentiæ* and *scientia visionis*, he says,

“Those who consider all the objects of knowledge as comprehended under one or other of the kinds that have been explained, are naturally conducted to that enlarged conception of the extent of the Divine decree, from which the Calvinistic doctrine of predestination unavoidably follows. The Divine decree is the determination of the Divine will to produce the universe, that is, the whole series of beings and events that were then future. The parts of this series arise in succession; but all were, from eternity, present to the Divine mind; and no cause was, at any time, to operate, or no effect that was at any time to be produced in the universe, can be excluded from the original decree, without supposing that the

actum voluntatis liberæ, quæ etiam *visionis* dici potest; quâ Deus omnia, quæ facere et permittere decrevit ita distincte novit, uti ea fieri et permittere voluit. Tertiam *mediam*, qua sub conditione novit quid homines aut angeli facturi essent pro sua libertate, si cum his aut illis circumstantiis, in hoc vel in illo rerum ordine constituerentur.”—*Disputat. Episcopii*. Part i, Disp. v.

decree was at first imperfect and afterwards received accessions. The determination to produce this world, understanding by that word the whole combination of beings, and causes, and effects, that were to come into existence, arose out of the view of all possible worlds, and proceeded upon reasons to us unsearchable, by which this world that now exists appeared to the Divine wisdom the fittest to be produced. I say, the determination to produce this world proceeded upon reasons ; because, we must suppose, that in forming the decrees, a choice was exerted, that the Supreme Being was at liberty to resolve either that he would create or that he would not create ; that he would give his work this form or that form, as he chose ; otherwise we withdraw from the Supreme Intelligence, and subject all things to blind fatality. But if a choice was exerted in forming the decree, the choice must have proceeded upon reasons ; for a choice made by a wise Being, without any ground of choice, is a contradiction in terms. At the same time it is to be remembered, that as nothing then existed but the Supreme Being, the only reason which could determine him in choosing what he was to produce, was its appearing to him fitter for accomplishing the end which he proposed to himself than any thing else which he might have produced. Hence *scientia visionis* is called by theologians *scientia libera*. To *scientia simplicis intelligentiæ* they gave the epithet *naturalis*, because the knowledge of all things possible arises necessarily from the nature of the Supreme mind ; but to *scientia visionis* they gave the epithet *libera*, because the qualities and extent of its objects are determined, not by any necessity of nature, but by the will of the Deity. Although in forming the Divine decree there was a choice of this world, proceeding upon a representation of all possible worlds, it is not to be conceived, that there was any interval between the choice and representation, or any succession in the parts of the choice. In the Divine mind there was an intuitive view of that immense subject, which it is not only impossible for our minds to comprehend at once, but in travelling through the parts of which we are instantly bewildered ; and one degree, embracing at once the end and means, ordained with perfect wisdom all that was to be.

“The condition of the human race entered into this decree. It is not, perhaps, the most important part of it when we speak of the formation of the universe, but it is a part which, even were it more insignificant than it is, could not be overlooked by the Almighty, whose attention extends to all his works, and which appears, by those dispensations of his Providence that have been made known to us, to be interesting in his eyes. A decree respecting the con-



dition of the human race includes the history of every individual: the time of his appearing upon the earth; the manner of his existence while he is an inhabitant of the earth, as it is diversified by the actions which he performs, and by the events, whether prosperous or calamitous, which befall him, and the manner of his existence after he leaves the earth, that is, future happiness or misery. A decree respecting the condition of the human race also includes the relations of the individuals to one another: it fixes their connexions in society, which have a great influence upon their happiness and their improvement; and it must be conceived as extending to the important events recorded in Scripture, in which the whole species have a concern. Of this kind is the sin of our first parents, the consequence of that sin reaching to all their posterity, the mediation of Jesus Christ appointed by God as a remedy for these consequences, the final salvation, through his mediation, of one part of the descendants of Adam, and the final condemnation of another part, notwithstanding the remedy. These events arise at long intervals of time, by a gradual preparation of circumstances, and the operation of various means. But by the Creator, to whose mind the end and means were at once present, these events were beheld in intimate connexion with one another, and in conjunction with many other events to us unknown, and consequently all of them, however far removed from one another as to the time of their actual existence, were comprehended in that one decree by which he determined to produce the world.”(6)

Now some things in this statement may be granted; as for instance, that when the choice, speaking after the manner of men, was between creating the world and not creating it, it appeared fitter to God to create than not to create; and that all actual events were foreseen, and will take place, so far as they are future, as they are foreseen; but where is the connexion between these points, and that absolute decree which in this passage is taken for either the same thing as foreseeing, or as necessarily involved in it? “The Divine decree,” says Dr. Hill, “is the determination of the Divine will to *produce* the universe, that is, the *whole series of BEINGS and EVENTS* that were then future.” If so, it follows, that it was the Divine will to *produce* the fall of man, as well as his creation; the offences which made redemption necessary, as the redemption itself: to produce the destruction of human beings, and their vices which are the means of that destruction; the salvation of another part of the race, and their faith and obedience, as the means of that salvation:—for by “one decree, embracing at once *the end and the*

means, he ordained, with perfect wisdom, all that was to be." This is in the true character of the Calvinistic theology; it dogmatizes with absolute confidence on some metaphysical assumption, and forgets for the time, that any such book as the Bible, a revelation of God, by God himself, exists in the world. If the determination of the Divine will, with respect to the creation of man, were the same kind of determination as that which respected his fall, how then are we to account for the means taken by God to prevent the fall, which were no less than the communication of an upright and perfect nature to man, from which his ability to stand in his uprightness arose, and the threatening of the greatest calamity, death, in order to deter him from the act of offence? How, in that case, are we to account for the declarations of God's *hatred* to sin, and for his own express declaration that "he *willeth* not the death of him that dieth?" How, for the obstructions he has placed in the way of transgression, which would be obstructions to his own determinations, if they can be allowed to be obstructions at all? How, for the intercession of Christ? How, for his tears shed over Jerusalem? Finally, how, for the declaration that "he *willeth* all men to be saved," and for his invitations to all, and the promises made to all? Here the discrepancies between the metaphysical scheme and the written word are most strongly marked; are so totally irreconcilable to each other, as to leave us to choose between the speculations of man, as to the operations of the Divine mind, and the declared will of God himself. The fact is, that Scripture can only be interpreted by denying that the determination of the Divine will is, as to "*beings and events*," the same kind of determination; and we are necessarily brought back again to the only distinction which is compatible with the written word, a determination in God to do, and a determination to permit. For if we admit that the decree to effect or produce is absolute, both "as to the end and means," then, beside the consequences which follow as above stated, and which so directly contradict the testimony of God himself; another equally revolting also arises, namely, that as the end decreed is, as we are told, most glorious to God, so the means, being controlled and directed to that end, are necessarily and directly connected with the glorification of God; and, so men glorify God by their vices, because by them they fulfil his will, and work out his designs according to the appointment of his "wisdom." That this has been boldly contended for by leading Calvinistic divines in former times, and by some, though of a lower class, in the present day, is well known: and that they are consistent in their deductions from the above premises, is so obvious, that it is matter of surprise, that those

Calvinists who are shocked at this conclusion should not either suspect the principles from which it so certainly flows, or that, admitting the doctrine, they should shun the explicit avowal of the inevitable consequence.

The sophistry of the above statement of the Calvinistic view of prescience and the decrees, as given by Dr. Hill, lies in this, that the determination of the Divine will to produce the universe is made to include a determination as absolute "to produce the whole series of beings and events that were then future;" and in assuming that this is involved in a perfect prescience of things, as actually to exist and take place. But among the "BEINGS" to be produced, were not only beings bound by their instincts, and by circumstances which they could not control, to act in some given manner; but also beings endowed with such freedom that they might act in different and opposite ways, as their own will might determine. Either this must be allowed or denied. If it is denied, then man is not a free agent, and, therefore, not accountable for his personal offences, if offences those acts can be called, to the doing of which there is "a determination of the Divine will," of the same nature as to the "producing of the universe" itself. This, however, is so destructive of the nature of virtue and vice; it so entirely subverts the *moral* government of God by merging it into his *natural* government; and it so manifestly contradicts the word of God, which, from the beginning to the end, supposes a power bestowed on man to avoid sin, and on this establishes his accountableness; that, with all these fatal consequences hanging upon it, we may leave this notion to its own fate. But if any such freedom be allowed to man, (either actually enjoyed or placed within his reach by the use of means which are within his power,) that he may both will and act differently, in any given case, from his ultimate volitions and the acts resulting therefrom, then cannot that which he actually does, as a free agent, say some sinful act, have been "determined" in the same manner by the Divine will, as the "production" of the universe and the "beings" which compose it. For if man is a being free to sin or not to sin; and it was the "determination of the Divine will" to produce such a being; it was his determination to give to him this liberty of *not* doing that which actually he does; which is wholly contrary to a determination that he should act in one given manner, and in that alone. For here, on the one hand, it is alleged that the Divine will absolutely determines to produce certain "*events*," and yet on the other it is plain that he absolutely determined to produce "*beings*" who should, by his will and consequent endowment, have in themselves the power to produce con-



trary events ; propositions which manifestly fight with each other, and cannot both be true. We must either, then, give up man's free agency and true accountability, or this absolute determination of events. The former cannot be renounced without involving the consequences above stated ; and the abandoning of the latter, brings us to the only conclusion which agrees with the word of God,—that the acts of free agents are not *determined*, but *foreseen* and *permitted* ; and are thus taken up, not as *the acts of God*, but as *the acts of men*, into the Divine government. “Ye devised evil against me,” says Joseph to his brethren, “but God meant it for good.” Thus the principle which vitiates Dr. Hill's statement is detected. Grotius has much better observed, “When we say that God is the cause of all things, we mean of all such things as have a real existence ; which is no reason why those things themselves should not be the cause of some accidents, such as actions are. God created men, and some other intelligences superior to man, with a liberty of acting ; which liberty of acting is not in itself evil, but may be the cause of something that is evil ; and to make God the author of evils of this kind, which are called moral evils, is the highest wickedness.(7)

Perhaps the notions which Calvinists form as to the will may be regarded as a consequence of the predestinarian branch of their system ; but whether they are among the metaphysical sources of their error, or consequents upon it, they may here have a brief notice.

If the doctrine just refuted were allowed, namely, that all events are produced by the determination of the Divine will ; and that the end and means are bound up in “one decree ;” the predestinarian had sagacity enough to discern that the *volitions*, as well as the *acts* of men, must be placed equally under bondage, to make the scheme consistent ; and, that whenever any moral action is the *end* proposed, the choice of the will, as the *means* to that end, must come under the same appointment and determination. It is, indeed, not denied, that creatures may lose the power to will that which is morally good. Such is the state of devils ; and such would have been the state of man, had he been left wholly to the consequences of the fall. The inability is, however, not a natural, but a moral one ; for volition, as a power of the mind, is not destroyed, but brought so completely under the dominion of a corrupt nature, as not to be *morally* capable of choosing any thing but evil. If man is not in this condition, it is owing, not to the remains of original goodness, as some suppose, but to that “grace of God” which is the result of the “free gift” bestowed upon all men ; but that the power to

choose that which is good, in some respects, and as a first step to the entire and exclusive choice of good in the highest decree, is in man's possession, must be certainly concluded from the calls so often made upon him in the word of God to change his conduct, and, in order to this, his will. "Hear, ye deaf, and see, ye blind," is the exhortation of a prophet, which, whilst it charges both spiritual deafness and blindness upon the Jews, supposes a power existing in them, both of opening the eyes, and unstopping the ears. Such are all the exhortations to repentance and faith addressed to sinners, and the threatenings consequent upon continued impenitence and unbelief; which equally suppose a power of considering, willing, and acting, in all things adequate to the commencement of a religious course. From whatever source it may be derived, and no other can be assigned to it consistently with the Scriptures than the grace of God, this power must be experienced to the full extent of the call and the obligation to these duties. A power of choosing only to do evil, and of remaining impenitent, cannot be reconciled to such exhortations. This would but be a mockery of men, and a mere show of equitable government on the part of God, without any thing correspondent to this appearance of equity in point of fact. The Calvinistic doctrine, however, takes another course. As the sin and the destruction of the reprobate is determined by the decree, and their will is either left to its natural proneness to the choice of evil, or is, by coaction, impelled to it; so the salvation of the elect being absolutely decreed, the will, at the appointed time, comes under an irresistible impulse which carries it to the choice of good. Nor is this only an occasional influence, leaving men afterwards, or by intervals, to freedom of choice, which might be allowed; but, in all cases, and at all times, the will, when directed to good, moves only under the unfrustrable impulses of grace. That man, therefore, has no choice, or at least no alternative in either case, is the doctrine assumed; and no other view can be consistently taken by those who admit the scheme of absolute predestination. To one class of objects is the will determined; no other being, in either case, possible: and thus one course of action, fulfilling the decree of God, is the only possible result, or the decree would not be absolute, and fixed.

Some Calvinists have adopted all the consequences which follow this view of the subject. They ascribe the actions and volitions of man to God, and regard sinful men as impelled to a necessity of sinning, in order to the infliction of that punishment which they think will glorify the sovereign wrath of him who made "the wicked" *intentionally* "for the day of evil." Enough has been said

in refutation of this gross and blasphemous opinion, which, though it inevitably follows from absolute predestination, the more modest writers of the same school have endeavoured to hide under various guises, or to reconcile to some show of justice by various subtleties.

It has, for instance, been contended, that as in the case of transgressors, the evil acts done by them are the choice of their corrupt will, they are, therefore, done *willingly*; and that they are in consequence punishable, although their will could not but choose them. This may be allowed to be true in the case of devils, supposing them at first to have voluntarily corrupted an innocent nature endowed with the power of maintaining its innocence, and that they were under no absolute decree determining them to this offence. For, though now their will is so much under the control of their bad passions, and is in itself so vicious, that it has no disposition at all to good, and from their nature, remaining in its present state, can have no such tendency; yet the original act, or series of acts, by which this state of their will and affections was induced, being their own, and the result of a deliberate choice between moral good and evil, both being in their own power, they are justly held to be culpable for all that follows, having had, originally, the power to avoid both the first sin and all others consequent upon it. The same may be said of sinful men, who have formed in themselves, by repeated acts of evil, at first easily avoided, various habits to which the will opposes a decreasing resistance in proportion as they acquire strength. Such persons, too, as are spoken of in the Epistle to the Hebrews, those whom "it is impossible to renew unto repentance," may be regarded as approaching very nearly to the state of apostate spirits, and being left without any of the aids of that Holy Spirit whom they have "quenched," cannot be supposed capable of willing good. Yet are they themselves justly chargeable with this state of their wills, and all the evils resulting from it. But the case of devils is widely different to that of men who, by their hereditary corruption, and the fall of human nature, to which they were not consenting parties, come into the world with this infirm, and, indeed, perverse state of the will, as to all good. It is not their personal fault that they are born with a will averse from good; and it cannot be their personal fault that they continue thus inclined only to evil if no assistance has been afforded, no gracious influence imparted, to counteract this fault of nature, and to set the will so far free, that it can choose either the good urged upon it by the authority and exciting motives of the Gospel, or, "making light" of that, to yield itself, in opposition to conviction, to the evil to which it is by nature prone. It is not denied, that the will, in its purely



natural state, and independent of all grace communicated to man through Christ, can incline only to evil ; but the question is, whether it is so left ; and whether, if this be contended for, the circumstance of a sinful act being the act of a will not able to determine otherwise, from whatever cause that may arise, whether from the influence of circumstances or from coercion, or from its own invincible depravity, renders him punishable who never had the means of preventing his will from lapsing into this diseased and vitiated state ; who was born with this moral disease ; and who, by an absolute decree, has been excluded from all share in the remedy ? This is the only simple and correct way of viewing the subject ; and it is quite independent of all metaphysical hypotheses as to the will. The argument is, that an act which has the consent of the will is punishable, although the will can only choose evil : we reply, that this is only true where the time of trial is past, as in devils and apostates ; and then only, because these are personally guilty of having so vitiated their wills as to render them incapable of good. But the case of men who have fallen by the fault of another, and who are still in a state of trial, is one totally different. The sentence is passed upon devils, and it is as good as past upon such apostates as the apostle describes in the Epistle to the Hebrews ; but the mass of mankind are still probationers, and are appointed to be judged according to their works, whether good or evil. We deny, then, first, that they are, in any case, left without the power of willing good ; and we deny it on the authority of Scripture. For, in no sense, can “life and death be set before us,” in order that we may “choose life,” if man is wholly derelict by the grace of God, and if he remains under his natural, and, but for the grace of God given to *all* mankind, his invincible inclination to evil. For if this be the natural state of mankind, and if to a part of them that remedial grace is denied, then is not “LIFE” set before them as an object of “choice ;” and if to another part that grace is so given, that it irresistibly and constantly works so as to compel the will to choose predetermined and absolutely appointed acts, no “death” is set before them as an object of choice. If, therefore, according to the Scriptures, both life and death are set before men, then have they power to choose or refuse either, which is conclusive, on the one hand, against the doctrine of the total dereliction of the reprobate, and on the other against the unfrustrable operation of grace upon the elect. So, also, when our Lord says, “I would have gathered you as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and YE WOULD not,” the notion that men who finally perish have no power of willing that which is good, is totally disproved. The

blame is manifestly, and beyond all the arts of cavilling criticism, laid upon their not WILLING IN A CONTRARY MANNER, which would be false upon the Calvinistic hypothesis. "I would not, and ye COULD not," ought, in that case, to have been the reading; since they are bound to one determination only, either by the external or internal influence of another, or by a natural and involuntary disease of the will, for which no remedy was ever provided.

Thus it is decided by the word of God itself, that men who perish might have "chosen life." It is confirmed, also, by natural reason; for it is most egregiously to trifle with the common sense of mankind to call that a righteous procedure in God which would by all men be condemned as a monstrous act of tyranny and oppression in a human judge, namely, to punish capitally, as for a personal offence, those who never could will or act otherwise, being impelled by an invincible and incurable natural impulse over which they never had any control. Nor is the case at all amended by the quibble that they act willingly, that is, with consent of the will; for since the will is under a natural and irresistible power to incline only one way, obedience is full as much out of their power by this state of the will, which they did not bring upon themselves, as if they were restrained from all obedience to the law of God by an external and irresistible impulse always acting upon them.

The case thus kept upon the basis of plain Scripture, and the natural reason of mankind, stands, as we have said, clear of all metaphysical subtleties, and cannot be subjected to their determination; but as attempts have been made to establish the doctrine of necessity, from the actual phenomena of the human will, we may glance, also, at this philosophic attempt to give plausibility to the predestinarian hypothesis.

The philosophic doctrine is, that the will is swayed by motives; that motives arise from circumstances; that circumstances are ordered by a power above us, and beyond our control; and that, therefore, our volitions necessarily follow an order and chain of events appointed and decreed by infinite wisdom. President Edwards, in his well known work on the will, applied this philosophy in aid of Calvinism; and has been largely followed by the divines of that school. But who does not see that this attempt to find a refuge in the doctrine of philosophical necessity affords no shelter to the Calvinian system, when pressed either by Scripture or by arguments founded upon the acknowledged principles of justice? For what matters it, whether the will is obliged to one class of volitions by the immediate influence of God, or by the denial of his remedial influence, the doctrine of the elder Calvinists; or that it

is obliged to a certain class of volitions by motives which are irresistible in their operation, which result from an arrangement of circumstances ordered by God, and which we cannot control? Take which theory you please you are involved in the same difficulties; for the result is, that men can neither will nor act otherwise than they do, being, in one case, inevitably disabled by an act of God, and in the other bound by a chain of events established by an Almighty power. The advocates for this philosophic theory of the will must be content to take this conclusion, therefore, and reconcile it as they can with the Scriptures; but they have the same task as their elder brethren of the same faith, and have made it no easier by their philosophy.

It is in vain, too, that they refer us to our own consciousness in proof of this theory. Nothing is more directly contradicted by what passes in every man's mind; and if we may take the terms human language has used on these subjects, as an indication of the general feelings of mankind it is contradicted by the experience of all ages and countries. For if the will is thus absolutely dependant upon motives, and motives arise out of uncontrollable circumstances, for men to praise or to blame each other is a manifest absurdity; and yet all languages abound in such terms. So, also, there can be no such thing as conscience, which, upon this scheme, is a popular delusion which a better philosophy might have dispelled. For why do I blame or commend myself in my inward thoughts, any more than I censure or praise others, if I am, as to my choice, but the passive creature of motives and predetermined circumstances?

But the sophistry is easily detected. The notion inculcated is, that motives influence the will just as an additional weight thrown into an even scale poises it and inclines the beam. This is the favourite metaphor of the necessitarians; yet, to make the comparison good, they ought to have first proved the will to be as passive as the balance, or, in other words, they should have annihilated the distinction between mind and matter. But this necessary connexion between motive and volition may be denied. For what are motives, as rightly understood here? Not physical causes, as a weight thrown into a scale; but *reasons* of choice, *views* and *conceptions* of things in the mind, which, themselves, do not *work* the will, as a machine; but in consideration of which, *the mind itself* wills and determines. But if the mind itself were obliged to determine by the strongest motive, as the beam is to incline by the heaviest weight, it would be obliged to determine always by the best reason; for motive being but a reason of action considered in the mind, then the best reason, being in the nature of things the



strongest, must always predominate. But this is, plainly, contrary to fact and experience. If it were not, all men would act reasonably, and none foolishly ; or, at least, there would be no faults among them but those of the understanding, none of the heart and affections. The weakest reason, however, too generally succeeds when appetite and corrupt affection are present ; that is to say, the weakest motive. For if this be not allowed, we must say, that under the influence of appetite the weakest reason always appears the strongest, which is also false, in fact ; for then there would be no sins committed against *judgment* and *conviction*, and that many of our sins are of this description, our consciences painfully convict us. That the mind wills and acts generally under the influence of motives, may, therefore, be granted ; but that it is passive, and operated upon by them necessarily, is disproved by the fact of our often acting under the weakest reason or motive, which is the character of all sins against our judgment.

But were we even to admit that present reasons or motives operate irresistibly upon the will, the necessary connexion between motive and volition would not be established ; unless it could be proved that we have no power to displace one motive by another, nor to control those circumstances from which motives flow. Yet, who will say that a person may not shun evil company and fly from many temptations ? Either this must be allowed, or else it must be a link in the necessary chain of events fixed by a superior power, that we should seek and not fly evil company ; and so the exhortations, “ when sinners entice thee consent thou not,” and “ go not into the way of sinners,” are very impertinent, and only prove that Solomon was no philosopher. But we are all conscious that we have the power to alter, and control, and avoid, the force of motives. If not, why does a man resist the same temptation at one time and yield to it at another, without any visible change of the circumstances ? He can also both change his circumstances by shunning evil company ; and fly the occasions of temptation ; and control that motive at one time to which he yields at another, under similar circumstances. Nay, he sometimes resists a powerful temptation, which is the same thing as resisting a powerful motive, and yields at another to a feeble one, and is conscious that he does so : a sufficient proof that there is an irregularity and corruptness in the *self-determining* active power of the *mind*, independent of motive. Still, farther, the motive or reason for an action may be a bad one, and yet be prevalent for want of the presence of a better reason or motive to lead to a contrary choice and act ; but, in how many instances is this the true cause why a better reason or stronger

motive is not present, that we have lived thoughtless and vain lives, little considering the good or evil of things? And if so, then the thoughtless might have been more thoughtful, and the ignorant might have acquired better knowledge, and thereby have placed themselves under the influence of stronger and better motives. Thus this theory does not accord with the facts of our own consciousness, but contradicts them. It is, also, refuted by every part of the moral history of man; and it may be, therefore, concluded that those speculations on the human will, to which the predestinarian theory has driven its advocates, are equally opposed to the words of Scripture, to the philosophy of mind, to our observation of what passes in others, and to our own convictions.

Our moral liberty manifestly consists in the united power of thinking and reasoning, and of choosing and acting upon such thinking and reasoning; so that the clearer our thought and conception is of what is fit and right, and the more constantly our choice is determined by it, the more nearly we rise to the highest acts and exercises of this liberty. The best beings have, therefore, the highest degree of moral liberty, since no motive to will or act wrong is any thing else but a violation of this established and original connexion between right reason, choice, and conduct; and if any necessity bind the irrational motive upon the will, it is either the result of bad voluntary habit, for which we are accountable; or necessity of nature and circumstances, for which we are not accountable. In the former case the actually influencing motive is evitable, and the theory of the necessitarians is disproved: in the latter it is confirmed; but then man is neither responsible to his fellow man nor to God.

Certain notions as to the **DIVINE SOVEREIGNTY** have also been resorted to by Calvinists, in order to render that scheme plausible which cuts off the greater part of the human race from the hope of salvation, by the absolute decree of God.

That the sovereignty of God is a scriptural doctrine no one can deny; but it does not follow, that the notions which men please to form of it should be received as scriptural; for religious errors consist not only in denying the doctrines of the word of God, but also in interpreting them fallaciously.

The Calvinistic view of God's sovereignty appears to be, his doing what he wills, only because he wills it. So Calvin himself has stated the case, as we have noticed above; but as this view is repugnant to all worthy notions of an infinitely wise Being, so it has no countenance in Scripture. The doctrine which we are there taught is, that God's sovereignty consists in his doing many things by virtue of his own supreme right and dominion, but that this right is under

the direction of his "*counsel*" or "*wisdom*." The brightest act of sovereignty is that of creation, and one in which, if in any, mere will might seem to have the chief place; yet, even in this act, by which myriads of beings of diverse powers and capacities were produced, "we are taught that all was done in *wisdom*." Nor can it be said that the sovereignty of God in creation, is uncontrolled by either justice or goodness. If the final cause of creation had been the misery of all sentient creatures, and all its contrivances had tended to that end: if, for instance, every sight had been disgusting, every smell a stench, every sound a scream, and every necessary function of life had been performed with pain, we must necessarily have referred the creation of such a world to a malignant being; and, if we are obliged to think it impossible that a good being could have employed his almighty power with the direct intention to inflict misery, we then concede that his acts of sovereignty are, by the very perfection of his nature, under the direction of his *goodness*, as to all creatures potentially existing, or actually existing whilst still innocent. Nor can we think it borne out by Scripture, or by the reasonable notions of mankind, that the exercise of God's sovereignty in the creation of things is exempt from any respect to *justice*, a quality of the Divine nature, which is nothing but his essential rectitude in exercise. It is true, that as existence, under all circumstances in which to exist is better upon the whole than not to exist, leaves the creature no claim to have been otherwise than it is made; and that God has a sovereign right to make one being an archangel and another an insect, so that "the thing formed" may not say "to him that formed it, why hast thou made me thus?" It could deserve nothing before creation, its being not having commenced; all that it is, and has, (its existent state being better than non-existence,) is, therefore, a boon conferred; and, in matters of grace, no axiom can be more clear, than that he who gratuitously bestows has the right "to do what he will with his own." But every creature having been formed without any consent of its own, if it be innocent of offence, either from the rectitude of its nature, or from a natural incapacity of offending, as not being a moral agent, appears to have a claim, in natural right, upon exemption from such pains and sufferings, as would render existence a worse condition than never to have been called out of nothing. For, as a benevolent being, which God is acknowledged to be, cannot make a creature with such an intention and contrivance, that, by its very constitution, it must necessarily be wholly miserable; and we see in this, that his sovereignty is regulated by his goodness as to the commencement of the existence of sentient



creatures ; so, from the moment they begin to be, the government of God over them commences, and sovereignty in *government* necessarily grounds itself upon the principles of equity and justice, and “the Judge of the whole earth” *must* and *will* “do right.”

This is the manifest doctrine of Scripture, for, although Almighty God often gives “no account of his matters,” nor, in some instances, admits us to know *how* he is both just and gracious in his administration, yet are we referred constantly to those general declarations of his own word, which assure us that he is so, that we may “walk by faith,” and wait for that period, when, after the faith and patience of good men have been sufficiently tried, the manifestation of these facts shall take place to our comfort and to his glory. In many respects, so far as we are concerned, we see no other reason for his proceedings, than that he so wills to act. But the error into which our brethren often fall, is to conclude, from their want of information in such cases, that God acts merely because he wills so to act ; that because he gives not those reasons for his conduct which we have no right to demand, that he acts without any reasons at all ; and because we are not admitted to the secrets of his council chamber, that his government is perfectly arbitrary, and that the main spring of his leading dispensations is to make a show of power : a conclusion which implies a most unworthy notion of God, which he has himself contradicted in the most explicit manner. Even his most mysterious proceedings are called “judgments ;” and he is said to work all things “according to the *counsel* of his own *will*,” a collation of words, which sufficiently show that not blind will, but will subject to “*counsel*,” is that SOVEREIGN WILL which governs the world.

“Whenever, therefore, God acts as a governor, as a rewarder, or punisher, he no longer acts as a mere sovereign, by his own sole will and pleasure, but as an impartial judge, guided in all things by invariable justice.

“Yet it is true, that, in some cases, mercy rejoices over justice, although severity never does. God may reward more, but he will never punish more than strict justice requires. It may be allowed, that God acts as sovereign in convincing some souls of sin, arresting them in their mad career by his resistless power. It seems also, that, at the moment of our conversion, he acts irresistibly. There may likewise be many irresistible touches in the course of our Christian warfare ; but still, as St. Paul might have been either obedient or ‘disobedient to the heavenly vision,’ so every individual may, after all that God has done, either improve his grace, or make it of none effect.

“Whatever, therefore, it has pleased God to do, of his sovereign pleasure, as Creator of heaven and earth ; and whatever his mercy may do on particular occasions, over and above what justice requires, the general rule stands firm as the pillars of heaven. ‘The Judge of all the earth will do right :’ ‘he will judge the world in righteousness,’ and every man therein, according to the strictest justice. He will punish no man for doing any thing which he could not possibly avoid ; neither for omitting any thing which he could not possibly do. Every punishment supposes the offender might have avoided the offence for which he is punished, otherwise to punish him would be palpably unjust, and inconsistent with the character of God our governor.”(8)

The case of HEATHEN NATIONS has sometimes been referred to by Calvinists, as presenting equal difficulties to those urged against their scheme of election and reprobation. But the cases are not at all parallel, nor can they be made so, unless it could be proved that heathens, *as such*, are inevitably excluded from the kingdom of heaven ; which is not, as some of them seem to suppose, a conceded point. Those, indeed, if there be any such, who, believing in the universal redemption of mankind, should allow this, would be most inconsistent with themselves, and give up many of those principles on which they successfully contend against the doctrine of absolute reprobation ; but the argument lies in small compass, and is to be determined by the word of God, and not by the speculations of men. The actual state of pagan nations is affectingly bad ; but nothing can be deduced from what they are in fact against their salvability ; for although there is no ground to hope for the salvation of great numbers of them, actual salvation is one thing, and possible salvation is another. Nor does it affect this question, if we see not *how* heathens may be saved ; that is, by what means repentance, and faith, and righteousness, should be in any such degree wrought in them, as that they shall become acceptable to God. The dispensation of religion under which all those nations are to whom the Gospel has never been sent, continues to be the patriarchal dispensation. That men were saved under that in former times we know, and at what point, if any, a religion becomes so far corrupted, and truth so far extinct, as to leave no means of salvation to men, nothing to call forth a true faith *in principle*, and obedience to what remains known or knowable of the original law, no one has the right to determine, unless he can adduce some authority from Scripture. That authority is certainly not available to the conclusion, that, in point of fact, the means of salvation are utterly withdrawn from

(8) Wesley's Works, vol. 15, p. 23

heathens. We may say that a murderous, adulterous, and idolatrous heathen will be shut out from the kingdom of heaven ; we must say this, on the express exclusion of all such characters from future blessedness by the word of God ; but it would be little to the purpose to say, that, as far as we know, all of them are wicked and idolatrous. As far as *we* know they may, but we do not know the whole case ; and, were these charges universally true, yet the question is not what the heathen are, but what they have the means of becoming. We indeed know that all are not equally vicious, nay, that some virtuous heathens have been found in all ages ; and some earnest and anxious inquirers after truth, dissatisfied with the notions prevalent in their own countries respectively ; and what these few were, the rest might have been likewise. But, if we knew no such instances of superior virtue and eager desire of religious information among them, the true question, “ what degree of truth is, after all, attainable by them ? ” would still remain a question which must be determined not so much by our knowledge of facts which may be very obscure ; but such principles and general declarations as we find applicable to the case in the word of God.

If all knowledge of right and wrong, and all gracious influence of the Holy Spirit, and all objects of faith have passed away from the heathen, through the fault of their ancestors “ not liking to retain God in their knowledge,” and without the present race having been parties to this wilful abandonment of truth, then they would appear no longer to be accountable creatures, being neither under *law* nor under *grace* ; but as we find it a doctrine of Scripture that all men are responsible to God, and that the “ whole world ” will be judged at the last day, we are bound to admit the accountability of all, and with that, the remains of law and the existence of a merciful government towards the heathen on the part of God. With this the doctrine of St. Paul accords. No one can take stronger views of the actual danger and the corrupt state of the Gentiles than he ; yet he affirms that the Divine law had not perished wholly from among them ; that though they had received no revealed law, yet they had a law “ written on their hearts ; ” meaning, no doubt, the traditionary law, the equity of which their consciences attested ; and, farther, that though they had not the written law, yet, that “ by nature,” that is, “ without an outward rule, though this, also, strictly speaking, is by preventing grace,” (9) they were capable of doing all the things contained in the law. He affirms, too, that all such Gentiles as were thus obedient, should be “ justified, in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men, by Jesus Christ,

(9) WESLEY'S Notes, in loc.



according to his Gospel." The possible obedience and the possible "justification" of heathens who have no written revelation are points, therefore, distinctly affirmed by the apostle in his discourse in the second chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, and the whole matter of God's sovereignty, as to the heathen, is reduced, not to the leaving of any portion of our race without the means of salvation, and then punishing them for sins which they have no means of avoiding ; but to the fact of his having given superior advantages to us, and inferior ones only to them ; a proceeding which we see exemplified in the most enlightened of Christian nations every day, for neither every part of the same nation is equally favoured with the means of grace, nor are all the families living in the same town and neighbourhood equally circumstanced as to means of religious influence and improvement. The principle of this inequality is, however, far different from that on which Calvinistic reprobation is sustained ; since it involves no inevitable exclusion of any individual from the kingdom of God, and because the general principle of God's administration in such cases is elsewhere laid down to be, the requiring of much where much is given, and the requiring of little where little is given : —a principle of the strictest equity.

An unguarded opinion as to the IRRESISTIBILITY OF GRACE, and the passiveness of man in conversion, has also been assumed, and made to give an air of plausibility to the predestinarian scheme. It is argued, if our salvation is of God and not of ourselves, then those only can be saved to whom God gives the grace of conversion ; and the rest, not having this grace afforded them, are, by the inscrutable counsel of God, passed by, and reprobated.

This is an argument *à posteriori* ; from the assumed passiveness of man in conversion to the election of a part only of mankind to life. The argument *à priori* is from partial election to life to the doctrine of irresistible grace, as the means by which the Divine decree is carried into effect. The doctrine of such an election has already been refuted, and it will be easy to show that it derives no support from the assumption that grace must work irresistibly in man in order that the honour of our salvation may be secured to God, which is the plausible dress in which the doctrine is generally presented.

It is allowed, and all scriptural advocates of the universal redemption of mankind will join with the Calvinists in maintaining the doctrine, that every disposition and inclination to good which originally existed in the nature of man is lost by the fall ; that all men, in their simply *natural* state, are "dead in trespasses and sins," and have neither the will nor the power to turn to God ; and that

no one is sufficient of himself to think or do any thing of a saving tendency. But, as all men are required to do those things which have a saving tendency, we contend, that the grace to do them has been bestowed upon all. Equally sacred is the doctrine to be held, that no person can repent or truly believe except under the influence of the Spirit of God ; and that we have no ground of boasting in ourselves, but that all the glory of our salvation, commenced and consummated, is to be given to God alone, as the result of the freeness and riches of his grace.

It will also be freely allowed, that the visitations of the gracious influences of the Holy Spirit are vouchsafed in the first instance, and in numberless other subsequent cases, quite independent of our seeking them or desire for them ; and that when our thoughts are thus turned to serious considerations, and various exciting and quickening feelings are produced within us, we are often wholly passive ; and also, that men are sometimes suddenly and irresistibly awakened to a sense of their guilt and danger by the Spirit of God, either through the preaching of the word instrumentally or through other means, and sometimes, even, independent of any external means at all ; and are thus constrained to cry out, "What must I do to be saved ?" All this is confirmed by plain verity of Holy Writ ; and is, also, as certain a matter of experience as that the motions of the Holy Spirit do often silently intermingle themselves with our thoughts, reasonings, and consciences, and breathe their milder persuasions upon our affections.

From these premises the conclusions which legitimately flow, are in direct opposition to the Calvinistic hypothesis. They establish,

1. The justice of God in the condemnation of men, which their doctrine leaves under a dark and impenetrable cloud. More or less of these influences from on high visit the finally impenitent, so as to render their destruction their own act by resisting them. This is proved, from the "Spirit" having "strove" with those who were finally destroyed by the flood of Noah ; from the case of the finally impenitent Jews and their ancestors, who are charged with "always *resisting* the Holy Ghost ;" from the case of the apostates mentioned in the Epistle to the Hebrews, who are said to have done "despite to the Spirit of grace ;" and from the solemn warnings given to men in the New Testament, not to "grieve" and "quench" the Holy Spirit. If, therefore, it appears that the destruction of men is attributed to their resistance of those influences of the Holy Spirit, which, but for that resistance, would have been saving, according to the design of God in imparting them, then is the justice

of God manifested in their punishment ; and it follows, also, that his grace so works in men, as to be both sufficient to lead them into a state of salvation, and even actually to place them in this state, and yet so as to be capable of being finally and fatally frustrated.

2. These premises, also, secure the glory of our salvation to the grace of God ; but not by implying the Calvinistic notion of the continued and uninterrupted irresistibility of the influence of grace and the passiveness of man, so as to deprive him of his agency ; but by showing that his agency, even when rightly directed, is upheld and influenced by the superior power of God, and yet so as to be still his own. For, in the instance of the mightiest visitation we can produce from Scripture, that of St. Paul, we see where the irresistible influence terminated, and where his own agency recommenced. Under the impulse of the conviction struck into his mind, as well as under the dazzling brightness which fell upon his eyes, he was passive, and the effect produced for the time *necessarily* followed ; but all the actions consequent upon this were the results of deliberation and personal choice. He submits to be taught in the doctrine of Christ ; “ he *confers* not with flesh and blood ;” “ he is not *disobedient* to the heavenly vision ;” “ he faints not” under the burthensome ministry he had received ; and he “ keeps his body under subjection, lest after having preached to others he should himself become a cast away.” All these expressions, so descriptive of consideration and choice, show that the irresistible impulse was not permanent, and that he was subsequently left to improve it or not, though under a powerful but still a resistible motive operating upon him to remain faithful.

For the gentler emotions produced by the Spirit, these are, as the experience of all Christians testifies, the ordinary and general manner in which the Holy Spirit carries on his work in man ; and, if all good desires, resolves, and aspirations, are from him, and not from our own nature, (and, if we are utterly fallen, from our own nature they cannot be,) then, if any man is conscious of having ever checked good desires, and of having opposed his own convictions and better feelings, he has in himself abundant proof of the resistibility of grace, and of the superability of those good inclinations which the Spirit is pleased to impart. He is equally conscious of the power of complying with them, though still in the strength of grace, which yet, whilst it works in him “ to will and to do,” neither wills nor acts *for him*, nor even by him, as a passive instrument. For if men were wholly and at all times passive under divine influence ; not merely in the *reception* of it, for all are, in that respect, passive ; but in the actings of it to practical ends, then would there



be nothing to mark the difference between the righteous and the wicked but an *act of God*, which is utterly irreconcilable to the Scriptures. They call the former "obedient," the latter "disobedient;" one "willing," the other "unwilling;" and promise or threaten accordingly. They attribute the destruction of the one to their refusal of the grace of God, and the salvation of the other, as the *instrumental* cause, to their acceptance of it; and to urge that that personal act by which we receive the grace of Christ, detracts from his glory as our Saviour by attributing our salvation to ourselves, is to speak as absurdly as if we should say that the act of obedience and faith required of the man who was commanded to stretch out his withered arm, detracted from the glory of Christ's healing virtue, by which, indeed, the power of complying with the command, and the condition of his being healed, was imparted.

It is by such reasonings, made plausible to many minds, by an affectation of metaphysical depth and subtilty, or by pretensions of magnifying the sovereignty and grace of God, (often, we doubt not, very sincere,) that the theory of election and reprobation, as held by the followers of Calvin with some shades of difference, but in all substantially the same, has had currency given to it in the church of Christ in these latter ages. How unsound and how contrary to the Scriptures they are, may appear from that brief refutation of them just given; but I repeat what was said above, that we are never to forget that this system has generally had interwoven with it many of the most vital points of Christianity. It is this which has kept it in existence; for otherwise it had never, probably, held itself up against the opposing evidence of so many plain Scriptures, and that sense of the benevolence and equity of God, which his own revelations, as well as natural reason, has riveted in the convictions of mankind. In one respect the Calvinistic and the Socinian schemes have tacitly confessed the evidence of the word of God to be against them. The latter has shrunk from the letter and common sense interpretation of Scripture within the clouds raised by a licentious criticism; the other has chosen rather to find refuge in the mists of metaphysical theories. Nothing is, however, here meant by this juxtaposition of theories so contrary to each other, but that both thus confess, that the *prima facie* evidence afforded by the word of God is not in their favour. If we intended more by thus naming on the same page systems so opposite, one of which, with all its faults, contains all that truth by which men may be saved, whilst the other excludes it, "we should offend against the generation of the children of God."

## CHAPTER XXIX.

## REDEMPTION—FURTHER BENEFITS.

HAVING endeavoured to establish the doctrine of the universal redemption of the human race, the enumeration of the leading blessings which flow from it may now be resumed. We have already spoken of *justification, adoption, regeneration, and the witness of the Holy Spirit*, and we proceed to another as distinctly marked, and as graciously promised in the Holy Scriptures: this is the ENTIRE SANCTIFICATION, or the perfected HOLINESS of believers; and as this doctrine, in some of its respects, has been the subject of controversy, the scriptural evidence of it must be appealed to and examined. Happily for us, a subject of so great importance is not involved in obscurity.

That a distinction exists between a regenerate state and a state of entire and perfect holiness will be generally allowed. Regeneration, we have seen, is concomitant with justification; but the apostles, in addressing the body of believers in the churches to whom they wrote their epistles, set before them, both in the prayers they offer in their behalf, and in the exhortations they administer, a still higher degree of deliverance from sin, as well as a higher growth in Christian virtues. Two passages only need be quoted to prove this. 1 Thess. v, 23, "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly, and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." 2 Cor. vii, 1, "Having these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." In both these passages deliverance from sin is the subject spoken of; and the prayer in one instance and the exhortation in the other goes to the extent of the entire sanctification of "the soul" and "spirit," as well as of the "flesh" or "body," from all sin; by which can only be meant our complete deliverance from all spiritual pollution, all inward depravation of the heart, as well as that which, expressing itself outwardly by the indulgence of the senses, is called "filthiness of the flesh."

The attainableness of such a state is not so much a matter of debate among Christians as the *time* when we are authorized to expect it. For as it is an axiom of Christian doctrine, that "without holiness no man can see the Lord;" and is equally clear that if we would "be found of him in *peace*," we must be found "with-

out spot, and blameless ;” and that the church will be presented by Christ to the Father without “fault ;” so it must be concluded, unless, on the one hand, we greatly pervert the sense of these passages, or, on the other, admit the doctrine of purgatory or some intermediate purifying institution, that the entire sanctification of the soul, and its complete renewal in holiness, must take place in this world.

Whilst this is generally acknowledged, however, among spiritual Christians, it has been warmly contended by many, that the final stroke, which destroys our natural corruption, is only given at death ; and that the soul, when separated from the body, and not before, is capable of that immaculate purity which these passages, doubtless, exhibit to our hope.

If this view can be refuted, then it must follow, unless a purgatory of some description be allowed after death, that the entire sanctification of believers at any time previous to their dissolution, and in the full sense of these evangelic promises, is attainable.

To the opinion in question, then, there appear to be the following fatal objections :

1. That we nowhere find the promises of entire sanctification restricted to the article of death, either expressly, or in fair inference from any passage of Holy Scripture.

2. That we nowhere find the circumstance of the soul’s union with the body represented as a necessary obstacle to its entire sanctification.

The principal passage which has been urged in proof of this from the New Testament, is that part of the seventh chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, in which St. Paul, speaking in the first person of the bondage of the flesh, has been supposed to describe his state, as a believer in Christ. But, whether he speaks of himself, or describes the state of others in a supposed case, given for the sake of more vivid representation in the first person, which is much more probable, he is clearly speaking of a person who had once sought justification by the works of the law, but who was then convinced, by the force of a spiritual apprehension of the extent of the acquirements of that law, and by constant failures in his attempts to keep it perfectly, that he was in bondage to his corrupt nature, and could only be delivered from this thralldom by the interposition of another. For, not to urge that his strong expressions of being “carnal,” “sold under sin,” and doing always “the things which he would not,” are utterly inconsistent with that moral state of believers in Christ which he describes in the next chapter ; and, especially, that he there declares that such as are in Christ Jesus “walk *not* after the



flesh, but after the spirit;" the seventh chapter itself contains decisive evidence against the inference which the advocates of the necessary continuance of sin till death have drawn from it. The apostle declares the person whose case he describes, to be under the *law*, and not in a state of deliverance by Christ; and then he represents him not only as despairing of self deliverance, and as praying for the interposition of a sufficiently powerful deliverer, but as thanking God that the very deliverance for which he groans is appointed to be administered to him by Jesus Christ. "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

This is, also, so fully confirmed by what the apostle had said in the preceding chapter, where he unquestionably describes the moral state of true believers, that nothing is more surprising than that so perverted a comment upon the seventh chapter, as that to which we have adverted, should have been adopted or persevered in. "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid! How shall we, who are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death? Therefore, we are buried with him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be, also, in the likeness of his resurrection; knowing this, that OUR OLD MAN IS CRUCIFIED WITH HIM, THAT THE BODY OF SIN MIGHT BE DESTROYED that henceforth we should not serve sin; for he that is dead is FREED FROM SIN." So clearly does the apostle show that he who is BOUND to the "body of death," as mentioned in the seventh chapter, is not in the state of a believer; and that he who has a true faith in Christ, "is FREED from sin."

It is somewhat singular, that the divines of the Calvinistic school should be almost uniformly the zealous advocates of the doctrine of the continuance of indwelling sin till death; but it is but justice to say, that several of them have as zealously denied that the apostle, in the seventh chapter of the Romans, describes the state of one who is justified by faith in Christ, and very properly consider the case there spoken of as that of one struggling in LEGAL bondage, and brought to that point of self despair and of conviction of sin and helplessness which must always precede an entire trust in the merits of Christ's death, and the power of his salvation.

3. The doctrine before us is disproved by those passages of Scripture which connect our entire sanctification with subsequent

habits and acts, to be exhibited in the conduct of believers *before death*. So in the quotation from Rom. vi, just given,—“knowing this, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that *henceforth* we should not serve sin.” So the exhortation in 2 Cor. vii, 1, also given above, refers to the present life, and not to the future hour of our dissolution; and in 1 Thess. v, 23, the apostle first prays for the entire sanctification of the Thessalonians, and then for their *preservation* in that hallowed state, “unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

4. It is disproved, also, by all those passages which require us to bring forth those graces and virtues which are usually called the fruits of the Spirit. That these are to be produced during our life and to be displayed in our spirit and conduct cannot be doubted; and we may then ask whether they are required of us in perfection and maturity? If so, in this degree of maturity and perfection, they necessarily suppose the entire sanctification of the soul from the opposite and antagonist evils. Meekness in its perfection supposes the extinction of all sinful anger; perfect love to God, supposes that no affection remains contrary to it; and so of every other perfect internal virtue. The inquiry, then, is reduced to this, whether these graces, in such perfection as to exclude the opposite corruptions of the heart, are of possible attainment. If they are not, then we cannot love God with our whole hearts; then we must be sometimes sinfully angry; and how, in that case, are we to interpret that *perfectness* in these graces which God hath required of us, and promised to us in the Gospel? For if the *perfection* meant (and let it be observed that this is a *scriptural* term, and must mean something) be so comparative as that we may be sometimes sinfully angry, and may sometimes divide our hearts between God and the creature, we may apply the same comparative sense of the term to good words and to good works, as well as to good affections. Thus when the apostle prays for the Hebrews, “Now the God of peace that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you *perfect* in every *good work*, to do his will,” we must understand this perfection of evangelical good works so that it shall sometimes give place to opposite evil works, just as good affections must necessarily sometimes give place to the opposite bad affections. This view can scarcely be soberly entertained by any enlightened Christian; and it must, therefore, be concluded, that the standard of our attainable Christian perfection, as to the affections, is a love of God so perfect as to “rule the heart” and exclude all rivalry, and a meekness so perfect as to cast out all sinful anger and prevent

its return ; and that as to good works the rule is, that we shall be so “perfect in every good work,” as to “do the will of God” habitually, fully, and constantly. If we fix the standard lower we let in a license totally inconsistent with that Christian purity which is allowed by all to be attainable, and we make every man himself his own interpreter of that *comparative* perfection which is often contended for as that only which is attainable.

Some, it is true, admit the extent of the promises and the requirements of the Gospel as we have stated them ; but they contend, that this is the mark at which we are to *aim*, the standard towards which we are to aspire, though neither is attainable fully till death. But this view cannot be true as applied to *sanctification* or deliverance from all inward and outward sin. That the *degree* of every virtue implanted by grace is not limited, but advances and grows in the living Christian throughout life, may be granted ; and through eternity also : but to say that these virtues are not attainable, through the work of the Spirit, in that degree which shall destroy all opposite vice, is to say, that God, under the Gospel, requires us to be what we cannot be, either through want of efficacy in his grace, or from some defect in its administration ; neither of which has any countenance from Scripture, nor is at all consistent with the terms in which the promises and exhortations of the Gospel are expressed. It is also contradicted by our own consciousness, which charges our criminal neglects and failures upon ourselves, and not upon the grace of God, as though it were insufficient. Either the consciences of good men have in all ages been delusive and over scrupulous ; or this doctrine of the necessary, though occasional, dominion of sin over us is false.

5. The doctrine of the necessary indwelling of sin in the soul till death involves other antisciptural consequences. It supposes that the seat of sin is in the flesh, and thus harmonizes with the pagan philosophy, which attributed all evil to matter. The doctrine of the Bible, on the contrary, is, that the seat of sin is in the soul ; and it makes it one of the proofs of the fall and corruption of our spiritual nature, that we are in bondage to the appetites and motions of the flesh. Nor does the theory which places the necessity of sinning in the connexion of the soul with the body account for the whole moral case of man. There are sins, as pride, covetousness, malice, and others, which are wholly spiritual ; and yet no exception is made in this doctrine of the necessary continuance of sin till death as to them. There is, surely, no need to wait for the separation of the soul from the body in order to be saved from evils which are the sole offspring of the spirit ; and yet these are made



as inevitable as the sins which more immediately connect themselves with the excitements of the animal nature.

This doctrine supposes, too, that the flesh must necessarily not only lust against the Spirit, but in no small degree, and on many occasions, be the conqueror: whereas, we are commanded to "*mortify* the deeds of the body;" to "*crucify*," that is, to put to death, "the flesh;" "*to put off* the old man," which, in its full meaning, must import separation from sin in fact, as well as the renunciation of it in will; and "*to put on* the new man." Finally, the apostle expressly states, that though the flesh stands victoriously opposed to *legal* sanctification, it is not insuperable by evangelical holiness.—"For what *the law* could not do in that it was weak *through the flesh*, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; that the righteousness of the law might be *fulfilled* in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit," Rom. viii, 3, 4. So inconsistent with the declarations and promises of the Gospel is the notion that, so long as we are in the body, "the flesh" must of necessity have at least the occasional dominion.

We conclude, therefore, as to the *time* of our complete sanctification; or, to use the phrase of the apostle Paul, "the destruction of the body of sin;" that it can neither be referred to the hour of death, nor placed subsequently to this present life. The attainment of perfect freedom from sin is one to which believers are called during the present life; and is necessary to that completeness of "holiness," and of those active and passive graces of Christianity by which they are called to glorify God in this world, and to edify mankind.

Not only the time, but the *manner* also, of our sanctification has been matter of controversy: some contending that all attainable degrees of it are acquired by the process of gradual mortification and the acquisition of holy habits; others alleging it to be instantaneous, and the fruit of an act of faith in the Divine promises.

That the regeneration which accompanies justification is a large approach to this state of perfected holiness; and that all dying to sin, and all growth in grace, advances us nearer to this point of *entire* sanctity, is so obvious, that on these points there can be no reasonable dispute. But they are not at all inconsistent with a more instantaneous work, when, the depth of our natural depravity being more painfully felt, we plead in faith the accomplishment of the promises of God. The great question to be settled is, whether the deliverance sighed after be held out to us in these promises as a present blessing? And, from what has been already said, there

appears no ground to doubt this ; since no small violence would be offered to the passages of Scripture already quoted, as well as to many others, by the opposite opinion. All the promises of God which are not expressly, or from their *order*, referred to future time, are objects of *present trust* ; and their fulfilment *now* is made conditional *only* upon our faith. They cannot, therefore, be pleaded in our prayers, with an entire reliance upon the truth of God, in vain. The general promise that we shall receive “all things whatsoever we ask in prayer, believing,” comprehends, of course, “all things” suited to our case which God has engaged to bestow ; and if the entire renewal of our nature be included in the number, without any limitation of time, except that in which we ask it in faith, then to this faith shall the promises of entire sanctification be given ; which, in the nature of the case, supposes an instantaneous work immediately following upon our entire and unwavering faith.

The only plausible objections made to this doctrine may be answered in few words.

It has been urged, that this state of entire sanctification supposes future *impeccability*. Certainly not ; for if angels and our first parents fell when in a state of immaculate sanctity, the renovated man cannot be placed, by his entire deliverance from inward sin, out of the reach of danger. This remark, also, answers the allegation, that we should thus be removed out of the reach of temptation ; for the example of angels and of the first man, who fell by temptation when in a state of native purity, proves that the absence of inward evil is not inconsistent with a state of probation ; and that this, in itself, is no guard against the attempts and solicitations of evil.

It has been objected, too, that this supposed state renders the atonement and intercession of Christ superfluous in future. But the very contrary of this is manifest when the case of an evangelical renewal of the soul in righteousness is understood. This proceeds from the grace of God in Christ, through the Holy Spirit, as the efficient cause ; it is received by faith as the instrumental cause ; and the state itself into which we are raised is maintained, not by inherent native power, but by the continual presence and sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit himself, received and retained in answer to ceaseless prayer ; which prayer has respect solely to the merits of the death and intercession of Christ.

It has been further alleged, that a person delivered from all inward and outward sin has no longer need to use the petition of the Lord's prayer,—“and forgive us our trespasses ;” because he has no longer need of pardon. To this we reply, 1. That it would be absurd to suppose that any person is placed under the necessity of

“trespassing,” in order that a general prayer designed for men in a mixed condition might retain its aptness to every particular case. 2. That trespassing of every kind and degree is not supposed by this prayer to be continued, in order that it might be used always in the same *import*, or otherwise it might be pleaded against the renunciation of any trespass or transgression whatever. 3. That this petition is still relevant to the case of the entirely sanctified and the evangelically perfect, since neither the perfection of the first man nor that of angels is in question ; that is, a perfection measured by the perfect law, which, in its obligations, contemplates all creatures as having sustained no injury by moral lapse, and admits, therefore, of no excuse from infirmities and mistakes of judgment ; nor of any degree of obedience below that which beings created naturally perfect, were capable of rendering. There may, however, be an entire sanctification of a being rendered *naturally* weak and *imperfect*, and so liable to mistake and infirmity, as well as to defect in the *degree* of that absolute obedience and service which the law of God, never bent or lowered to human weakness, demands from all. These defects, and mistakes, and infirmities, may be quite consistent with the entire sanctification of the soul, and the *moral* maturity of a being still *naturally* infirm and imperfect. Still, further, if this were not a sufficient answer, it may be remarked, that we are not the ultimate judges of our own case as to our “trespasses,” or our exemption from them ; and we are not, therefore, to put ourselves into the place of God, “who is greater than our hearts.” So, although St. Paul says, “I know nothing by myself,” that is, I am conscious of no offence, he adds, “yet am I not hereby justified ; but he that judgeth me is the Lord :” to whom, therefore, the appeal is every moment to be made through Christ the Mediator, and who, by the renewed testimony of his Spirit, assures every true believer of his acceptance in his sight.

Another benefit which accrues to all true believers, is the **RIGHT TO PRAY**, with the special assurance that they shall be heard in all things which are according to the will of God. “And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us.” It is under this gracious institution that all good men are constituted intercessors for others, even for the whole world ; and that God is pleased to order many of his dispensations, both as to individuals and to nations, in reference to “his elect who cry day and night unto him.”

With respect to every real member of the body or church of Christ, the **PROVIDENCE** of God is *special* ; in other words, they are *individually* considered in the administration of the affairs of this life



by the Sovereign Ruler, and their measure of good and of evil is appointed with constant reference to their advantage, either in this life or in eternity. "The hairs of their head" are, therefore, said to be "numbered," and, "all things" are declared "to work together for their good."

To them also VICTORY OVER DEATH is awarded. They are freed from its fear in respect of consequences in another state; for the apprehension of future punishment is removed by the remission of their sins, and the attestation of this to their minds by the Holy Spirit, whilst a patient resignation to the will of God, as to the measure of their bodily sufferings, and the strong hopes and joyful anticipations of a better life cancel and subdue that horror of pain and dissolution which is natural to man. "Forasmuch, then, as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he, also, himself took part of the same, that, through death, he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver them, who, through fear of death, were all their life time subject to bondage," Heb. ii, 14, 15.

THE IMMEDIATE RECEPTION OF THE SOUL INTO A STATE OF BLESSEDNESS after death, is also another of the glorious promises of the new covenant to all them that endure to the end, and "die in the Lord."

This is so explicitly taught in the New Testament, that, but for the admission of a philosophical error, it would, probably, have never been doubted by any persons professing to receive that book, as of Divine authority. Till, in recent times, the belief in the materiality of the human soul was chiefly confined to those who entirely rejected the Christian revelation; but, when the Socinians adopted this notion, without wholly rejecting the Scriptures, it was promptly perceived that the doctrine of an intermediate state, and the materiality of the soul, could not be maintained together; (1) and the most violent and disgraceful criticisms and evasions have, therefore, by this class of interpreters been resorted to, in order to save a notion as unphilosophical as it is contrary to the word of God. Nothing can be more satisfactory than the observations of Dr. Campbell on this subject.

"Many expressions of Scripture, in the natural and obvious sense, imply that an intermediate and separate state of the soul is

(1) A few divines, and but few, have also been found, who, still admitting the essential distinction between body and spirit, have thought that their separation by death incapacitated the soul for the exercise of its powers. This suspension they call "the sleep of the soul." With the materialist death causes the entire annihilation, for the time, of the thinking property of matter. Both opinions are, however, refuted by the same scriptural arguments.

actually to succeed death. Such are the words of the Lord to the penitent thief upon the cross, Luke xxiii, 43. Stephen's dying petition, Acts vii, 59. The comparisons which the apostle Paul makes in different places, (2 Cor. v, 6, &c; Phil. i, 21,) between the enjoyment which true Christians can attain by their continuance in this world, and that which they enter on at their departure out of it, and several other passages. Let the words referred to be read by any judicious person, either in the original or in the common translation, which is sufficiently exact for this purpose, and let him, setting aside all theory or system, say, candidly, whether they would not be understood, by the gross of mankind, as presupposing that the soul may and will exist separately from the body, and be susceptible of happiness or misery in that state. If any thing could add to the native evidence of the expressions, it would be the unnatural meanings that are put upon them, in order to disguise that evidence. What shall we say of the metaphysical distinction introduced for this purpose between absolute and relative time? The apostle Paul, they are sensible, speaks of the saints as admitted to enjoyment in the presence of God, immediately after death. Now, to palliate the direct contradiction there is in this to their doctrine, that the vital principle, which is all they mean by the soul, remains extinguished between death and the resurrection, they remind us of the difference there is between absolute or real and relative or apparent time. They admit, that if the apostle be understood as speaking of real time, what is said flatly contradicts their system; but, say they, his words must be interpreted as spoken only of apparent time. He talks, indeed, of entering on a state of enjoyment immediately after death, though there may be many thousands of years between the one and the other; for he means only, that when that state shall commence, however distant, in reality, the time may be, the person entering upon it will not be sensible of that distance, and, consequently, there will be to him an apparent coincidence with the moment of his death. But does the apostle any where give a hint that this is his meaning? or is it what any man would naturally discover from his words? That it is exceedingly remote from the common use of language, I believe hardly any of those, who favour this scheme, will be partial enough to deny. Did the sacred penman then mean to put a cheat upon the world, and, by the help of an equivocal expression, to flatter men with the hope of entering, the instant they expire, on a state of felicity, when, in fact, they knew that it would be many ages before it would take place? But were the hypothesis about the extinction of the mind between death and the resurrection well founded, the apparent coincidence they

speak of is not so clear as they seem to think it. For my part, I cannot regard it as an axiom, and I never heard of any who attempted to demonstrate it. To me it appears merely a corollary from Mr. Locke's doctrine, which derives our conceptions of time from the succession of our ideas, which, whether true or false, is a doctrine to be found only among certain philosophers, and which, we may reasonably believe, never came into the heads of those to whom the Gospel, in the apostolic age, was announced.

"I remark that even the curious equivocations (or, perhaps, more properly, mental reservation) that has been devised for them, will not, in every case, save the credit of apostolical veracity. The words of Paul to the Corinthians are, *knowing that whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord; again, we are willing rather to be absent from the body and present with the Lord.* Could such expressions have been used by him, if he had held it impossible to be with the Lord, or, indeed, anywhere, without the body; and that, whatever the change was which was made by death, he could not be in the presence of the Lord, till he returned to the body? Absence from the body, and presence with the Lord, were never, therefore, more unfortunately combined, than in this illustration. Things are combined here as coincident, which, on the hypothesis of those gentlemen, are incompatible. If recourse be had to the original, the expressions in Greek are, if possible, still stronger. They are, *οἱ ἐνδημουντες ἐν τῷ σώματι*, *those who dwell in the body*, who are *ἐκδημεντες ἀπο τῆς Κυρίας*, *at a distance from the Lord.* As, on the contrary, they are *οἱ ἐκδημεντες ἐκ τῆς σώματος*, *those who have travelled out of the body*, who are *οἱ ἐνδημουντες πρὸς τὸν Κυρίον*, *those who reside, or are present with the Lord.* In the passage to the Philippians, also, the commencement of his presence with the Lord is represented as coincident, not with his return to the body, but with his leaving it; with the dissolution, not with the restoration of the union.

"From the tenor of the New Testament, the sacred writers appear to proceed on the supposition that the soul and the body are naturally distinct and separable, and that the soul is susceptible of pain or pleasure in a state of separation. It were endless to enumerate all the places which evince this. The story of the rich man and Lazarus, Luke xvi, 22, 23. The last words of our Lord upon the cross, Luke xxiii, 46, and of Stephen, when dying. Paul's doubts, whether he was in the body or out of the body, when he was translated to the third heaven and Paradise, 2 Cor. xii, 2, 3, 4. Our Lord's words to Thomas, to satisfy him that he was not a spirit, Luke xxiv, 39. And, to conclude, the express mention



of the denial of spirits as one of the errors of the Sadducees. Acts xxiii, 8, *For the Sadducees say there is no resurrection, neither angel nor spirit*, μεθε ἀγγελον μεθε πνευμα. All these are irrefragable evidences of the general opinion on this subject of both Jews and Christians. By *spirit*, as distinguished from *angel*, is evidently meant the departed spirit of a human being; for, that man is here, before his natural death, possessed of a vital and intelligent principle, which is commonly called his soul or spirit, it was never pretended that they denied.”(2)

In this intermediate, but felicitous and glorious state, the disembodied spirits of the righteous will remain in joy and felicity with Christ, until the general judgment; when another display of the gracious effects of our redemption, by Christ, will appear in the glorious RESURRECTION of their bodies to an *immortal life*: thus distinguishing them from the wicked, whose resurrection will be to “shame and everlasting contempt,” or, to what may be emphatically termed, an *immortal death*.

On this subject no point of discussion, of any importance, arises among those who admit the truth of Scripture, except as to the way in which the doctrine of the resurrection of the body is to be understood;—whether a resurrection of the substance of the body be meant, or of some minute and indestructible part of it. The latter theory has been adopted for the sake of avoiding certain supposed difficulties. It cannot, however, fail to strike every impartial reader of the New Testament, that the doctrine of the resurrection is there taught without any nice distinctions. It is always exhibited as a miraculous work; and represents the same body which is laid in the grave as the subject of this change from death to life, by the power of Christ. Thus, our Lord was raised in the same body in which he died, and his resurrection is constantly held forth as the model of ours; and the apostle Paul expressly says, “Who shall change *our vile body*, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body.” The only passage of Scripture which appears to favour the notion of the rising of the immortal body from some indestructible germ, is 1 Cor. xv, 35, &c, “But some men will say, How are the dead raised up, and with what body do they come? Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened except it die; and that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain,” &c. If, however, it had been the intention of the apostle, holding this view of the case, to meet objections to the doctrine of the resurrection, grounded upon the difficulties of conceiving how

the same body, in the popular sense, could be raised up in substance, we might have expected him to correct this misapprehension, by declaring, that this was not the Christian doctrine ; but that some small parts of the body only, bearing as little proportion to the whole as the germ of a seed to the plant, would be preserved, and be unfolded into the perfected body at the resurrection. Instead of this, he goes on immediately to remind the objector of the differences which exist between material bodies as they now exist ; between the plant and the bare or naked grain ; between one plant and another ; between the flesh of men, of beasts, of fishes, and of birds ; between celestial and terrestrial bodies ; and between the lesser and greater celestial luminaries themselves. Still further he proceeds to state the difference, not between the germ of the body to be raised, and the *body* given at the resurrection ; but between *the body itself*, understood popularly, which dies, and the body which shall be raised. “ It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption,” which would not be true of the supposed *incorruptible* and imperishable germ of this hypothesis ; and can only be affirmed of the body itself, considered in substance, and in its present state corruptible. Further, the question put by the objector, “ How are the dead raised up ?” does not refer to the *modus agendi* of the resurrection, or the process or manner in which the thing is to be effected, as the advocates of the germ hypothesis appear to assume. This is manifest from the answer of the apostle, who goes on immediately to state, not in what *manner* the resurrection is to be effected, but what shall be the state or condition of the resurrection body, which is no answer at all to the question, if it be taken in that sense.

The first of the two questions in the passage referred to relates to the *possibility* of the resurrection, “ How are the dead raised up ?” the second to the *kind of body* which they are to take, supposing the fact to be allowed. Both questions, however, imply a denial of the fact, or, at least, express a strong doubt concerning it. It is thus that πως “*how*,” in the first question, is taken in many passages where it is connected with a verb ;(3) and the

(3) Gen. xxxix, 9, Πως ποιησω, How shall I,—how is it *possible* that I should do this great wickedness ?—“ How, then, *can* I,” say our translators. Exod. vi, 12, “ Behold, the children of Israel have not hearkened unto me ; how, then, shall Pharaoh hear me ?”—πως εισακουσεται μου Φαραω ;—how is it *likely*, or *possible* that Pharaoh should hear me ? See also verse 30. Judges xvi, 15, “ And she said unto him, Πως λεγεις, How *canst* thou say I love thee ?” 2 Sam. xi, 11, may also be considered in the LXX. 2 Kings x, 4, “ But they were exceedingly afraid, and said, Behold, two kings stood not before him : και πως, how then shall we stand ?”—how is it *possible* that we should stand ? Job ix, 2, Πως γαρ εσται δικαιος βροτος ;—For

second question only expresses the *general* negation or doubt more particularly, by implying, that the objector could not conceive of any kind of body being restored to man, which would not be an evil and imperfection to him. For the very reason why some of the Christians of that age denied, or strongly doubted, the resurrection of the body; explaining it figuratively, and saying that it was past already; was, that they were influenced to this by the notion of their philosophical schools, that the body was the prison of the soul, and that the greatest deliverance men could experience was to be eternally freed from their connexion with matter. Hence the early philosophising sects in the Christian church, the Gnostics, Marcionites, &c, denied the resurrection, on the same ground as the philosophers, and thought it opposed to that perfection which they hoped to enjoy in another world. Such persons appear to have been in the church of Corinth as early as the time of St. Paul, for that in this chapter he answers the objections, not of pagans, but of professing Christians, appears from ver. 12, "How say some *among you*, that there is no resurrection of the dead." The objection, therefore, in the minds of these persons to the doctrine of the resurrection, did not lie against the doctrine of the raising up of the substance of the same body, so that, provided this notion could be dispensed with, they were prepared to admit, that a new material body might spring from its germ, as a plant from seed.

how shall mortal man be just with, or in the presence of, God?—how is it *possible*? See what follows; Psalm lxxii, (lxxiii,) 11; *Πως εγνω ὁ Θεος*; "How doth God know?"—how is it *possible* that he should know? See the connexion. Jer. viii, 8; *Πως ερεετε*, "how do ye say,"—how is it that ye say,—how *can* ye say, We are wise?—Ibid. xxix, 7, (xlvii, 7,) *Πως ησυχασει*; "How *can* it,"—the sword of the LORD,—"*be* quiet?"—Ezek. xxxiii, 10, "If our transgressions and our sins be upon us, and we pine away in them, *πως ζήσομεθα*; how should we then live?" Matt. vii, 4, "Or how, *πως*, wilt thou say to thy brother?"—where Rosenm. observes that *πως* has the force of negation.. Ibid. xii, 26, "If Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; *πως ουν σαθησεται*, how shall then,"—how *can* then,—"*his kingdom stand*?" See also Luke xi, 18.—Matt. xxiii, 33, "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, *πως φυγητε*, how *can* ye escape the damnation of hell?" "*qui fieri potest*?" ROSEN. Mark iv, 40, *Πως εκ εχετε πιστην*; "How is it that ye have no faith?"—Luke i, 34, may also be adduced. John v, 47, "If ye believe not his writings, *πως—πιστευετε*; how shall ye,"—how *can* ye,—"*believe my words*?" Romans iii, 6, "God forbid: for then, *πως κρινει*, how shall God judge the world?"—how is it *possible*? See the preceding verse. Ibid. viii, 32, *Πως—χαρισεται*; "how shall he not,"—how is it *possible* but that he should,—"*with him also freely give us all things*." Ibid. x, 14, *Πως—επικαλεσονται*, "How then shall they,"—how is it *possible* that they should,—"*call on him in whom they have not believed*?" &c. 1 Tim. iii, 5, "For if a man know not how to rule his own house, *πως*, how shall he take care of the church of God?" Heb. ii, 3, "How shall we escape,"—how is it *possible* that we should escape,—"*if we neglect so great salvation*?" 1 John iii, 17, *Πως*, "How dwelleth the love of God in him?"—how *can* it dwell? Comp. ch. iv, 20, where *δυναται* is added.



They stumbled at the doctrine in every form, because it involved the circumstance of the reunion of the spirit with matter, which they thought an *evil*. When, therefore, the objector asks, "How are the dead raised up?" (4) he is to be understood, not as inquiring as to the process, but as to the possibility. The doubt may, indeed, be taken as an implied negation of the possibility of the resurrection with reference to God; and then the apostle, by referring to the springing up of the grain of corn, when dissolved and putrified, may be understood to show that the event was not inconceivable, by referring to God's omnipotence, as shown in his daily providence, which, *à priori*, would appear as marvellous and incredible. But it is much more probable, that the impossibility implied in this question refers, not to the power of God, which every Christian in the church at Corinth must be supposed to have been taught to conceive of as almighty, and, therefore, adequate to the production of this effect; but as relating to the contrariety which was assumed to exist between the doctrine of the reunion of the soul with the body, and those hopes of a higher condition in a future life, which both reason and revelation taught them to form. The second question, "With what body do they come?" like the former, is a question not of inquiry, but of denial, or, at least, of strong doubt, importing, that no idea could be entertained by the objector of any material body being made the residence of a disenthralled spirit, which could comport with those notions of deliverance from the bondage of corruption by death, which the philosophy of the age had taught, and which Christianity itself did not discountenance. The questions, though different, come, therefore, nearly to the same import, and this explains why the apostle chiefly dwells upon the answer to the latter only, by which, in fact, he replies to both. The grain cast into the earth even dies and is corrupted, and that which is sown is not "the body which shall be," in form and quality, but "naked grain;" yet into the plant, in its perfect form, is the same matter transformed. So the flesh of beasts, birds, fishes, and man, is the same matter, though exhibiting different qualities. So also bodies celestial are of the same matter as "bodies terrestrial;" and the more splendid luminaries of the heavens are, in substance, the same as those of inferior glory. It is thus that the apostle reaches his conclusion, and shows, that the doctrine of our reunion with the body implies in it no imperfection—nothing contrary to the hopes of liberation "from the burthen of this flesh;" because of the high and glorified qualities which God

(4) The present indicative verb is here used, as it is generally throughout this chapter, for the future.

is able to give to matter ; of which the superior purity, splendour, and energy of some material things in this world, in comparison of others, is a visible demonstration. For after he has given these instances, he adds, "So is the resurrection of the dead ; it is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption ; it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory ; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power ; it is sown a natural (an animal) body ; it is raised a spiritual body," so called, "as being accommodated to a spirit, and far excelling all that is required for the transaction of earthly and terrene affairs ;"(5) and so intent is the apostle on dissipating all those gross representations of the resurrection of the body which the objectors had assumed as the ground of their opposition, and which they had, probably, in their disputations, placed under the strongest views, that he guards the true Christian doctrine, on this point, in the most explicit manner, "Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, neither doth corruption inherit incorruption ;" and, therefore, let no man henceforward affirm, or assume it in his argument, that we teach any such doctrine. This, also, he strengthens by showing, that as to the saints who are alive at the second coming of Christ, they also shall be in like manner "CHANGED," and that "this corruptible," as to them also, "shall put on incorruption."

Thus, in the argument, the apostle confines himself wholly to the possibility of the resurrection of the body in a refined and glorified state ; but omits all reference to the mode in which the thing will be effected, as being out of the line of the objector's questions, and in itself above human thought, and wholly miraculous. It is, however, clear, that when he speaks of *the body*, as the subject of this wondrous "change," he speaks of it popularly, as the same body in substance, whatever changes in its qualities or figure may be impressed upon it. Great *general* changes it will experience, as from corruption to incorruption, from mortality to immortality ; great changes of a *particular* kind will also take place, as its being freed from deformities and defects, and the accidental varieties produced by climate, aliments, labour, and hereditary diseases. It is also laid down by our Lord, that "in the resurrection they shall neither marry nor be given in marriage, but be like to the angels of God ;" and this also implies a certain change of structure ; and we may gather from the declaration of the apostle, that though "the stomach" is now adapted "to meats, and meats to the stomach, God will destroy both it and them ;" that the animal appetite for food

will be removed, and the organ now adapted to that appetite have no place in the renewed frame. But great as these changes are, the human form will be retained in its perfection, after the model of our Lord's "glorious body," and the substance of the matter of which it is composed will not thereby be affected. That the same body which was laid in the grave shall arise out of it, is the manifest doctrine of the Scriptures.

The notion of an incorruptible germ, or that of an original and unchangeable *stamen*, out of which a new and glorious body, at the resurrection, is to spring, appears to have been borrowed from the speculations of some of the Jewish Rabbins, who speak of some such supposed part in the human frame, under the name *LUZ*, to which they ascribe marvellous properties, and from which the body was to arise. No allusion is, however, made to any such opinion by the early fathers, in their defences of the doctrine of the resurrection from the dead. On the contrary, they argue in such a way, as to prove the possibility of the *reunion* of the *scattered parts* of the body; which sufficiently shows that the germ theory had not been resorted to, by Christian divines at least, in order to harmonize the doctrine of the resurrection with philosophy. So Justin Martyr, in a fragment of his concerning the resurrection, expressly answers the objection, that it is impossible for the flesh, after a corruption and perfect dissolution of all its parts, should be united together again, and contends, "that if the body be not raised complete, with all its integral parts, it would argue a want of power in God;" and although some of the Jews adopted the notion of the germinating or springing up of the body from some one indestructible part, yet the most orthodox of their Rabbies contended for the resurrection of the same body. So Maimonides says, "Men, in the same manner as they before lived, with the same body shall be restored to life by God, and sent into this life with the same identity:" and "that nothing can properly be called a resurrection of the dead, but the return of the very same soul, into the very same body from which it was separated."(6)

This theory, under its various forms, and whether adopted by Jews or Christians, was designed, doubtless, to render the doctrine of a resurrection from the dead less difficult to conceive, and more acceptable to philosophic minds; but, like most other attempts of the same kind to bring down the supernatural doctrines of revelation to the level of our conceptions, it escapes none of the original difficulties, and involves itself in others far more perplexing.

(6) Rambam apud Pocockium in Notis Miscellan. Port. Mos. p. 125.



For if by this hypothesis it was designed to remove the difficulty of conceiving how the scattered parts of one body could be preserved from becoming integral parts of other bodies, it supposes that the constant care of Providence is exerted to maintain the incorruptibility of those individual germs, or stamina, so as to prevent their assimilation with each other. Now, if they have this by original quality, then the same quality may just as easily be supposed to appertain to every particle which composes a human body; so that though it be used for food, it shall not be capable of assimilation, in any circumstances, with another human body. But if these germs, or stamina, have not this quality by their original nature, they can only be prevented from assimilating with each other by that operation of God which is present to all his works, and which must always be directed to secure the execution of his own ultimate designs. If this view be adopted, then, if the resort must at last be to the superintendence of a Being of infinite power and wisdom, there is no greater difficulty in supposing that his care to secure this object shall extend to a million than to a thousand particles of matter. This is, in fact, the true and rational answer to the objection that the same piece of matter may happen to be a part of two or more bodies, as in the instances of men feeding upon animals which have fed upon men, and of men feeding upon one another. The question here is one which simply respects the frustrating a final purpose of the Almighty by an operation of nature. To suppose that he cannot prevent this, is to deny his power; to suppose him inattentive to it, is to suppose him indifferent to his own designs; and to assume that he employs care to prevent it, is to assume nothing greater, nothing in fact so great, as many instances of control, which are always occurring; as, for instance, the regulation of the proportion of the sexes in human births, which cannot be attributed to chance, but must either be referred to superintendence, or to some original law.

Thus these theories afford no relief to the only real difficulty involved in the doctrine, but leave the whole case still to be resolved into the almighty power of God. But they involve themselves in the fatal objection, that they are plainly in opposition to the doctrine of the Scriptures. For,

1. There is no resurrection of *the body* on this hypothesis, because the germ, or stamina, can in no good sense be called "*the body*." If a finger, or even a limb, is not the body, much less can these minuter parts be entitled to this appellation.

2. There is, on these theories, no resurrection at all. For if the preserved part be a germ, and the analogy of germination be

adopted ; then we have no longer a *resurrection* from *death*, but a *vegetation* from a suspended principle of secret *life*. If the stamina of Leibnitz be contended for, then *the body*, into which the soul enters at the resurrection, with the exception of these minute stamina, is provided for it by the addition and aggregation of new matter, and we have a *creation*, not a *resurrection*.

3. If bodies in either of these modes, are to be framed for the soul, by the addition of a large mass of new matter, the resurrection is made substantially the same with the pagan notion of the metempsychosis ; and if St. Paul, at Athens, preached, not “ Jesus and the resurrection,” but Jesus and a transmigration into a new body, it will be difficult to account for his hearers scoffing at a doctrine which had received the sanction of several of their own philosophic authorities.

Another objection to the resurrection of the body has been drawn from the changes of its substance during life. The answer to this is, that allowing a frequent and total change of the substance of the body (which, however, is but an hypothesis) to take place, it affects not the doctrine of Scripture, which is, that the body which is laid in the grave shall be raised up. But then, we are told, that if our bodies have in fact undergone successive changes during life, the bodies in which we have sinned or performed rewardable actions, may not be, in many instances, the same bodies as those which will be actually rewarded or punished. We answer, that rewards and punishments have their relation to the body, not so much as it is the *subject* but the *instrument* of reward and punishment. It is the soul only which perceives pain or pleasure, which suffers or enjoys, and is, therefore, the only rewardable *subject*. Were we, therefore, to admit such corporeal mutations as are assumed in this objection, they affect not the case of our accountability. The personal identity or sameness of a rational being, as Mr. Locke has observed, consists in self consciousness : “ By this every one is to himself what he calls *self*, without considering whether that self be continued in the same or divers substances. It was by the same *self* which reflects on an action done many years ago, that the action was performed.” If there were indeed any weight in this objection, it would affect the proceedings of human criminal courts in all cases of offences committed at some distance of time ; but it contradicts the common sense, because it contradicts the common consciousness and experience of mankind.





## PART THIRD.

### THE MORALS OF CHRISTIANITY.



#### CHAPTER I.

##### THE MORAL LAW.

OF the Law of God, as the subject of a Divine and adequately authenticated revelation, some observations were made in the first part of this work. That such a law exists, so communicated to mankind, and contained in the Holy Scriptures;—that we are under obligation to obey it as the declared will of our Creator and Lord;—that this obligation is grounded upon our natural relation to him as creatures made by his power, and dependent upon his bounty, are points which need not, therefore, be again adverted to, nor is it necessary to dwell upon the circumstances and degrees of its manifestation to men, under those former dispensations of the true religion which preceded Christianity. We have exhibited the leading DOCTRINES of the Scriptures, as they are found in that perfected system of revealed religion, which we owe to our Saviour, and to his apostles, who wrote under the inspiration of that Holy Spirit whom he sent forth “to lead them into all truth;” and we shall now find in the discourses of our Lord, and in the apostolical writings, a system of moral principles, virtues, and duties, equalling in fulness and perfection that great body of DOCTRINAL TRUTH which is contained in the New Testament; and deriving from it its vital influence and efficacy.

It is, however, to be noticed, that the Morals of the New Testament are not proposed to us in the form of a regular code. Even in the books of Moses, which have the legislative form to a great extent, all the principles and duties which constituted the full character of “godliness,” under that dispensation, are not made the subjects of formal injunction by particular precepts. They are partly infolded in general principles, or often take the form of injunction in an apparently incidental manner, or are matters of

obvious inference. A preceding code of traditionary moral law is also all along supposed in the writings of Moses and the prophets, as well as a consuetudinary ritual and a doctrinal theology; both transmitted from the patriarchs. This, too, is eminently the case with Christianity. It supposes that all who believed in Christ admitted the Divine authority of the Old Testament; and it assumes the perpetual authority of its morals, as well as the truth of its fundamental theology. The constant allusions in the New Testament to the moral rules of the Jews and patriarchs, either expressly as precepts, or as the data of argument, sufficiently guard us against the notion, that what has not in so many words been re-enacted by Christ and his apostles is of no authority among Christians. In a great number of instances, however, the form is directly preceptive, so as to have all the explicitness and force of a regular code of law; and is, as much as a regular code could be, a declaration of the sovereign will of Christ, enforced by the sanctions of eternal life and death.

This, however, is a point on which a few confirmatory observations may be usefully adduced.

No part of the preceding dispensation, designated generally by the appellation of "THE LAW," is repealed in the New Testament, but what is obviously ceremonial, typical, and incapable of coexisting with Christianity. Our Lord, in his discourse with the Samaritan woman, declares, that the hour of the abolition of the temple worship was come; the Apostle Paul, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, teaches us that the Levitical services were but *shadows*, the *substance* and *end* of which is Christ; and the ancient visible church, as constituted upon the ground of natural descent from Abraham, was abolished by the establishment of a spiritual body of believers to take its place.

No precepts of a purely political nature, that is, which respect the civil subjection of the Jews to their theocracy, are, therefore, of any force to us as *laws*, although they may have, in many cases, the greatest authority as *principles*. No ceremonial precepts can be binding, since they were restrained to a period terminating with the death and resurrection of Christ; nor are even the patriarchal rites of circumcision and the passover obligatory upon Christians, since we have sufficient evidence, that they were of an adumbrative character, and were laid aside by the first inspired teachers of Christianity.

With the MORAL PRECEPTS which abound in the Old Testament the case is very different, as sufficiently appears from the different and even contrary manner in which they are always spoken of by

Christ and his apostles. When our Lord, in his sermon on the mount, says, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets; I am not come to destroy the law; but to fulfil;" that is, to confirm or establish it:—the entire scope of his discourse shows, that he is speaking exclusively of the moral precepts of THE LAW, eminently so called, and of the moral injunctions of the prophets founded upon them, and to which he thus gives an equal authority. And in so solemn a manner does he enforce this, that he adds, doubtless as foreseeing that attempts would be made by deceiving or deceived men professing his religion to lessen the authority of the moral law,—“Whosoever, therefore, shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven;” that is, as St. Chrysostom interprets, “he shall be the farthest from attaining heaven and happiness, which imports that he shall not attain it at all.”

In like manner St. Paul, after having strenuously maintained the doctrine of justification by faith alone, anticipates an objection by asking, “Do we then make void the law through faith?” and subjoins, “God forbid, yea we *establish* the law:” meaning by “the law,” as the context and his argument shows, the moral and not the ceremonial law.

After such declarations it is worse than trifling for any to contend, that, in order to establish the authority of the moral law of the Jews over Christians, it ought to have been formally re-enacted. To this, however, we may further reply, not only that many important moral principles and rules found in the Old Testament were never *formally* enacted among the Jews, were traditional from an earlier age, and received at different times the more indirect authority of inspired recognition; but, to put the matter in a stronger light, that all the leading moral precepts of the Jewish Scriptures are, in point of fact, proposed in a manner which has the full force of formal re-enactment, as the laws of the Christian church. This argument, from the want of formal re-enactment, has therefore no weight. The summary of the law and the prophets, which is to love God with all our heart, and to serve him with all our strength, and to love our neighbour as ourselves, is unquestionably enjoined, and even re-enacted by the Christian Lawgiver. When our Lord is explicitly asked by “one who came unto him and said, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?” The answer given shows that the moral law contained in the Decalogue is so in force under the Christian dispensation, that obedience to it is necessary to final salvation:—“If thou wilt enter into life,



keep the commandments." And that nothing ceremonial is intended by this term is manifest from what follows. "He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder. Thou shalt not commit adultery. Thou shalt not steal," &c, Matt. xix, 17-19. Here, also, we have all the force of a formal re-enactment of the Decalogue, a part of it being evidently put for the whole. Nor were it difficult to produce passages from the discourses of Christ and the writings of the apostles, which enjoin all the precepts of this law taken separately, by their authority, as indispensable parts of Christian duty, and that, too, under their original sanctions of life and death: so that the two circumstances which form the true character of a LAW in its highest sense, DIVINE AUTHORITY and PENAL SANCTIONS, are found as truly in the New Testament as in the Old. It will not, for instance, be contended, that the New Testament does not enjoin the acknowledgment and worship of one God alone; nor that it does not prohibit idolatry; nor that it does not level its maledictions against false and profane swearing; nor that the Apostle Paul does not use the very words of the fifth commandment preceptively when he says, Eph. vi, 2, "Honour thy father and mother, which is the first commandment with promise;" nor that murder, adultery, theft, false witness, and covetousness, are not all prohibited under pain of exclusion from the kingdom of God. Thus, then, we have the whole Decalogue brought into the Christian code of morals by a distinct injunction of its separate precepts, and by their recognition as of permanent and unchangeable obligation: the fourth commandment, respecting the Sabbath only, being so far excepted, that its injunction is not so expressly marked. This, however, is no exception in fact; for besides that its original place in the two tables sufficiently distinguishes it from all positive, ceremonial, and typical precepts, and gives it a moral character, in respect of its *ends*, which are, first, *mercy* to servants and cattle, and, second, the *worship* of Almighty God, undisturbed by worldly interruptions and cares, it is necessarily included in that "law" which our Lord declares he came not to destroy, or abrogate; in that "law" which St. Paul declares to be "established by faith," and among those "commandments" which our Lord *declares* must be "kept," if any one would "enter into life." To this, also, the practice of the apostles is to be added, who did not cease themselves from keeping one day in seven holy, nor teach others so to do; but gave to "the Lord's day" that eminence and sanctity in the Christian church which the seventh day had in the Jewish, by consecrating it to holy uses; an alteration not affecting the precept at all, except in an unes-

sential circumstance, (if indeed in that,) and in which we may suppose them to act under Divine suggestion.

Thus, then, we have the obligation of the whole Decalogue as fully established in the New Testament as in the Old as if it had been formally re-enacted; and that no formal re-enaetment of it took place, is itself a presumptive proof that it was never regarded by the Lawgiver as temporary, which the formality of republication might have supposed.

It is important to remark, however, that, although the moral laws of the Mosaic dispensation pass into the Christian code, they stand there in other and higher circumstances; so that the New Testament is a more perfect dispensation of the knowledge of the moral will of God than the Old. In particular,

1. They are more expressly extended to the heart, as by our Lord, in his sermon on the mount; who teaches us that the thought and inward purpose of any offence is a violation of the law prohibiting its external and visible commission.

2. The principles on which they are founded are carried out in the New Testament into a greater variety of duties, which, by embracing more perfectly the social and civil relations of life, are of a more universal character.

3. There is a much more enlarged injunction of positive and particular virtues, especially those which constitute the Christian temper.

4. By all overt acts being inseparably connected with corresponding principles in the heart, in order to constitute acceptable obedience, which principles suppose the regeneration of the soul by the Holy Ghost. This moral renovation is, therefore, held out as necessary to our salvation, and promised as a part of the grace of our redemption by Christ.

5. By being connected with promises of Divine assistance, which is peculiar to a law connected with evangelical provisions.

6. By their having a living illustration in the perfect and practical example of Christ.

7. By the higher sanctions derived from the clearer revelation of a future state, and the more explicit promises of eternal life, and threatenings of eternal punishment.

It follows from this, that we have in the Gospel the most complete and perfect revelation of moral law ever given to men; and a more exact manifestation of the brightness, perfection, and glory of that law, under which angels and our progenitors in Paradise were placed, and which it is at once the delight and interest of the most perfect and happy beings to obey.

It has, however, fared with morals as with doctrines, that they have been often, and by a strange perversity, studied, without any reference to the authority of the Scriptures. As we have had systems of NATURAL RELIGION drawn out of the materials furnished by the Scriptures, and then placed to the sole account of human reason ; so we have also various systems of morals drawn, as far as the authors thought fit, from the same source, and put forth under the title of MORAL PHILOSOPHY, implying too often, or, at least, sanctioning the inference, that the unassisted powers of man are equally adequate to the discovery of doctrine and duty ; or, at best, that Christianity but perfects what uninspired men are able not only to commence, but to carry onward to a considerable approach to perfection. This observation may be made as to both—that whatever is found correct in doctrine, and pure in morals in ancient writers or systems, may be traced to indirect revelation ; and that so far as mere reason has applied itself to discovery in either, it has generally gone astray. The modern systems of natural religion and ethics are superior to the ancient, not because the reason of their framers is superior, but because they have had the advantage of a light from Christianity, which they have not been candid enough generally to acknowledge. For those who have written on such subjects with a view to lower the value of the Holy Scriptures, the remarks in the first part of this work must suffice ; but of that class of moral philosophers, who hold the authority of the Sacred Books, and yet sedulously omit all reference to them, it may be inquired what they propose, by disjoining morals from Christianity, and considering them as a separate science ? Authority they cannot gain, for no obligation to duty can be so high as the command of God ; nor can that authority be applied in so direct a manner, as by a revelation of his will : and as for the perfection of their system, since they discover no duties not already enjoined in the Scriptures, or grounded upon some general principles they contain, they can find no apology, from the additions they make to our moral knowledge, to put Christianity, on all such subjects, wholly out of sight.

All attempts to teach morals, independent of Christianity, even by those who receive it as a Divine revelation, must, notwithstanding the great names which have sanctioned the practice, be considered as of mischievous tendency, although the design may have been laudable, and the labour, in some subordinate respects, not without utility :

1. Because they silently convey the impression, that human reason, without assistance, is sufficient to discover the full duty of man towards God and towards his fellow creatures.



2. Because they imply a deficiency in the moral code of our religion, which does not exist; the fact being that, although these systems borrow much from Christianity, they do not take in the whole of its moral principles, and, therefore, so far as they are accepted, as substitutes, displace what is perfect for what is imperfect.

3. Because they turn the attention from what is fact, the revealed LAW of God, with its appropriate sanctions, and place the obligation to obedience either on fitness, beauty, general interest, or the natural authority of truth, which are all matters of opinion; or, if they ultimately refer it to the will of God, yet they *infer* that will through various reasonings and speculations, which in themselves are still matters of opinion, and as to which men will feel themselves to be in some degree free.

4. The duties they enjoin are either merely outward in the act, and so they disconnect them from internal principles and habits, without which they are not acceptable to God, and but the shadows of real virtue, however beneficial they may be to men; or else they assume that human nature is able to engraft those principles and habits upon itself, and to practise them without abatement and interruption; a notion which is contradicted by those very Scriptures they hold to be of Divine authority.

5. Their separation of the *doctrines* of religion from its *morals*, leads to an entirely different process of promoting morality among men to that which the infinite wisdom and goodness of God has established in the Gospel. They lay down the rule of conduct, and recommend it from its excellence *per se*, or its influence upon individuals and upon society, or perhaps because it is manifested to be the will of the Supreme Being, indicated from the constitution of human nature, and the relations of men. But Christianity rigidly connects its doctrines with its morals. Its doctrine of man's moral weakness is made use of to lead him to distrust his own sufficiency; its doctrine of the atonement shows at once the infinite evil of sin, and encourages men to seek deliverance from its power. Its doctrine of regeneration by the influence of the Holy Spirit, implies the entire destruction of the love of evil, and the direction of the whole affection of the soul to universal virtue. Its doctrine of prayer opens to man a fellowship with God, invigorating to every virtue. The example of Christ, the imitation of which is made obligatory upon us, is in itself a moral system in action, and in principle; and the revelation of a future judgment brings the whole weight of the control of future rewards and punishments to bear upon the motives and actions of men, and is the source of

that fear of offending God which is the constant guard of virtue, when human motives would in a multitude of cases avail nothing.

It may indeed be asked, whether the teaching of morals must then in all cases be kept in connexion with religion? and whether the philosophy of virtues and of vices, with the lower motives by which they are urged upon men, may not be usefully investigated? We answer, that if the end proposed by this is not altogether speculative, but something practical; if the case of an immoral world is taken up by moralists with reference to its cure, or even to its emendation in any effectual degree, the whole is then resolved into this simple question,—whether a weaker instrument shall be preferred to that which is powerful and effective? Certain it is that the great end of Christianity, so far as its influence upon society goes, is to moralize mankind; but its infinitely wise Author has established and authorized but ONE process for the correction of the practical evils of the world, and that is, the teaching and enforcement of THE WHOLE TRUTH as it stands in his own Revelations; and to this only has he promised his special blessing. A distinct class of ethical Teachers, imitating heathen philosophers in the principles and modes of moral tuition, is, in a Christian country, a violent anomaly; and implies an absurd return to the twilight of knowledge after the sun itself has arisen upon the world.

Within proper guards, and in strict connexion with the *whole* Christian system, what is called Moral Philosophy is not, however, to be undervalued; and from many of the writers above alluded to much useful instruction may be collected, which, though of but little efficacy in itself, may be invigorated by uniting it with the vital and energetic doctrines of religion, and may thus become directive to the conduct of the serious Christian. Understanding then by Moral Philosophy, not that pride of science which borrows the discoveries of the Scriptures and then exhibits itself as their rival, or affects to supply their deficiencies; but as a modest scrutiny into the reasons on which the moral precepts of revelation may be grounded, and a wise and honest application of its moral principles to particular cases, it is a branch of science which may be usefully cultivated, in connexion with Christianity.

With respect to the *reasons* on which moral precepts rest, we may make a remark similar to that offered in a former part of this work, on the doctrines of revelation. Some of those doctrines rest wholly on the authority of the Revealer; others are accompanied with a manifest rational evidence; and a third class may partially disclose their *rationale* to the patient and pious inquirer. Yet the authority of each class as a subject of faith is the same; it rests

upon the character of God and his relations to us ; and that doctrine is equally binding which is enjoined on our faith without other rational evidence than that which proves it to be a part of a revelation from heaven, as that which exercises, and delights our rational faculties, by a disclosure of the internal evidence of its truth. When God has permitted us to “turn aside” to see some “great sight” of manifested wisdom, we are to obey the invitation ; but still we are always to remember that the authority of a revealed truth stands on infinitely higher ground than our perception of its reasonableness.

So also as to the moral precepts of the Bible, the rational evidence is afforded in different degrees, and it is both allowable and laudable in us to investigate and collect it ; but still with this caution, that the authority of such injunctions is not to be regulated by our perception of their reasons, although the reasons, when apparent, may be piously applied to commend the authority. The discoveries we may make of fitness or any other quality in a precept cannot be the highest reason of our obedience ; but it may be a reason for obeying with accelerated alacrity. The obligation of the Sabbath would be the same were no obvious reasons of mercy and piety connected with it ; but the influence of the precept upon our interests and that of the community commends the precept to our affections as well as to our sense of duty.

With respect to the *application* of general precepts, that practical wisdom which is the result of large and comprehensive observation has an important office. The precepts of a universal Revelation must necessarily be, for the most part, general, because if rules had been given for each case in detail, then truly, as St. John observes, “the world could not have contained the books written.” The application of these general principles to that variety of cases which arises in human affairs, is the work of the Christian Preacher, and the Christian Moralist. Where there is honesty of mind, ordinarily there can be no difficulty in this ; and in cases which involve some difficulty, when the interpretation of the law is made, as it always ought, to favour the rule ; and when, in doubtful cases, the safer course is adopted, such is the explicit character of the general principles of the Holy Scriptures, that no one can go astray. The Moral Philosophy which treats of *exceptions* to general rules, is always to be watched with jealousy ; and ought to be shunned when it presumes to form rules out of supposed exceptions. This is affecting to be wiser than the Lawgiver ; and such philosophy assumes an authority in the control of human conduct to which it has no title ; and steps in between individuals and their consciences in



cases where Almighty God himself has not chosen to relieve them ; and where they are specially left, as all sometimes are, to " Him with whom they have to do," without the intervention of any third party. Systems of Casuistry and Cases of Conscience have happily gone into general disuse. That they have done more harm upon the whole than good, and defiled more consciences than they have relieved, cannot be doubted by any one who has largely examined them. They have passed away just in proportion as the Scriptures themselves have been circulated through society, and as that preaching has been most prevalent which enforces the doctrine of Supreme Love to God and our Neighbour, as the sum of the Law and of the Gospel. They most abounded in the Romish Church, as best befitting its system of darkness and delusion ; (7) and though works of this kind are found among Protestants in a better form, they have gradually and happily fallen into neglect.

A few words may here be offered on what has been termed, the ground of Moral Obligation.

Some writers have placed this in "the eternal and necessary fitness of things ;" which leaves the matter open to the varying conclusions which different individuals may draw, as to this eternal and necessary fitness ; and still further, leaves that very natural question quite unanswered,—Why is any one *obliged* to act according to the fitness of things ?

Others have referred to a supposed original perception of what is right and wrong ; a kind of fixed and permanent and unalterable moral sense, by which the qualities of actions are at once determined ; and from the supposed universal existence of this perception, they have argued the obligation to act accordingly. This scheme, which seems to confound that in human nature to which an appeal may be made when the understanding is enlightened by real truth, with a discriminating and directive principle acting independently of instruction, is also unsatisfactory. For the moral sense is, in fact, found under the control of ignorance and error ; nor does it possess a sensitiveness in all cases in proportion to the truth received into the understanding. The worst crimes have often been committed with a conviction of their being right, as in the case of religious persecutions ; and absence of the habit of attending to the quality of our actions often renders the abstract truth laid up in the understanding useless, as to its influence upon the conscience. But if all that is said of this moral sense were true, still it would not establish the principle of obligation. That

(7) M. le Feore, preceptor of Louis XIII, not unaptly called Casuistry, "The art of quibbling with God."

supposes superior *authority*; and should we allow the moral sense to act uniformly, still how is the *obligation* to perform what it approves to be demonstrated, unless some higher consideration be added to the case?

More modern moralists have taken the tendency of any course of action to produce the greatest good upon the whole as the source of moral obligation; and with this they often connect the will of God, of which they consider this general tendency to be the manifestation. It were better, surely, to refer at once to the will of God, as *revealed* by himself without incumbering the subject with the circuitous and, at best, doubtful process of first considering what is good upon the whole, and then inferring that this must needs be the will of a wise and benevolent Being. The objection, too, holds in this case, that this theory leaves it still a mere matter of opinion, in which an interested party is to be the judge, whether an action be upon the whole good; and gives a rule which would be with difficulty applied to some cases, and is scarcely at all applicable to many others which may be supposed.

The only satisfactory answer which the question as to the source of moral obligation, can receive, is, that it is found in **THE WILL OF GOD**. For since the question respects the duty of a created being with reference to his Creator, nothing can be more conclusive than that the Creator has an absolute right to the obedience of his creatures; and that the creature is in duty obliged to obey Him from whom it not only has received being, but by whom that being is constantly sustained. It has indeed been said, that even if it be admitted, that I am obliged to obey the will of God, the question is still open, "*Why* am I obliged to obey his will?" and that this brings us round to the former answer; because he can only will what is upon the whole best for his creatures. But this is confounding that which may be, and doubtless is, a rule to God in the commands which he issues, with that which really *obliges* the creature. Now, that which in truth obliges the creature is not the nature of the commands issued by God; but the relation in which the creature itself stands to God. If a creature can have no existence, nor any power or faculty independently of God, it can have no right to employ its faculties independently of him; and if it have no right to employ its faculties in an independent manner, the right to rule its conduct must rest with the Creator alone; and from this results the obligation of the creature to obey.

Such is the principle assumed in the Scriptures, where the creative and rectoral relations of God are inseparably united, and the obligation of obedience is made to follow upon the fact of our exist-

ence ; and if the will of God, as the source of obligation, be so obvious a rule, the only remaining question is, whether we shall receive that will as it is expressly revealed by himself ; or, wilfully forgetting that such a revelation has been made, we shall proceed to *infer* it by various processes of induction ? The answer to this might have been safely left to the common sense of mankind, had not the vanity of philosophizing so often interposed to perplex so plain a point.

We must not here confound the will of God as the source of moral *obligation*, with the notion that right and wrong have no existence but as they are so constituted by the will of God. They must have their foundation in the reality of things. *What* moral rectitude is, and *why* it *obliges*, are quite distinct questions. It is to the latter only that the preceding observations apply. As to the former, the following remarks, from a recent intelligent publication, are very satisfactory :—

“Virtue, as it regards man, is the conformity or harmony of his affections and actions with the various relations in which he has been placed,—of which conformity the perfect intellect of God, guided in its exercise by his infinitely holy nature, is the only infallible judge.

“*We sustain various relations to God himself.* He is our Creator,—our Preserver,—our Benefactor,—our Governor. ‘He is the Framer of our bodies, and the Father of our spirits.’ He sustains us ‘by the word of his power ;’ for, as we are necessarily dependent beings, our continued existence is a kind of prolonged creation. We owe all that we possess to Him ; and our future blessings must flow from his kindness. Now there are obviously certain affections and actions which harmonize or correspond with these relations. To love and obey God manifestly besit our relation to him, as that great Being from whom our existence as well as all our comforts flow. He who showers his blessings upon us ought to possess our affections ; he who formed us has a right to our obedience. It is not stated merely, let it be observed, that it is impossible to contemplate our relation to God without perceiving that we are morally bound to love and obey him ; (though that is a truth of great importance ;) for I do not consent to the propriety of the representation, that virtue depends either upon our perceptions or our feelings. There is a real harmony between the relations in which we stand to God, and the feelings and conduct to which reference has been made ; and therefore the human mind has been formed capable of perceiving and feeling it.

“*We sustain various relations to each other.* God has formed ‘of



one blood all the families of the earth.' Mutual love and brotherly kindness, the fruit of love, are required by this relation,—they harmonize or correspond with it. We are children; we are loved, and guarded, and supported, and tended with unwearied assiduity by our parents. Filial affection and filial obedience are demanded by this relation; no other state of mind, no other conduct, will harmonize with it. We are, perhaps, on the other hand, parents. Instrumentally at least we have imparted existence to our children; they depend on us for protection, support, &c; and to render that support, is required by the relation we bear to them. It is, however, needless to specify the various relations in which we stand to each other. With reference to all I again say, that they necessarily involve obligations to certain states of mind, and certain modes of conduct, as harmonizing with the relations; and that rectitude is the conformity of the character and conduct of an individual with the relations in which he stands to the beings by whom he is surrounded.

“It is by no means certain to me, that this harmony between the actions and the relations of a moral agent, is not what we are to understand by that ‘conformity to the fitness of things,’ in which some writers have made the essence of virtue to consist. Against this doctrine, it has been objected, that it is indefinite, if not absurd; because, as it is alleged, it represents an action as right and fit, without stating what it is fit for,—an absurdity as great, says the objector, as it would be to say that ‘the angles at the base of an isosceles triangle are equal without adding to one another, or to any other angle.’ Dr. Brown also, in arguing against this doctrine, says, ‘There must be a principle of moral regard, independent of reason, or reason may in vain see a thousand fitnesses, and a thousand truths; and would be warmed with the same lively emotions of indignation, against an inaccurate timepiece or an error in arithmetic calculation, as against the wretch who robbed, by every fraud that could elude the law, those who had already little of which they could be deprived, that he might riot a little more luxuriously, while the helpless, whom he had plundered, were starving around him.’ Now, why may we not say, in answer to the former objector, that the conformity of an action with the relations of the agent, is the fitness for which Clarke contends? And why may not we reply to Dr. Brown, that,—allowing, as we do, the necessity of that susceptibility of moral emotion for which he contends,—the emotion of approbation which arises on the contemplation of a virtuous action, is not the virtue of the action, nor the perception of its accordance with the relations of the agent, BUT THE ACCORD-

ANCE ITSELF? 'That a being,' says Dewar, 'endowed with certain powers, is bound to love and obey the Creator and Preserver of all, is truth, whether I perceive it or no; and we cannot perceive it possible that it can ever be reversed.'

"All the relations to which reference has been made, are, in one sense, arbitrary. Our existence as creatures is to be ascribed to the mere good pleasure of God. The relations which bind society together, the conjugal, parental, filial relation, depend entirely upon the sovereign will of Him who gave us our being; but the conduct to which these relations oblige us, is by no means arbitrary. Having determined to constitute the relations, He could not but enjoin upon us the conduct which his word prescribes. He was under no obligation to create us at all; but, having given us existence, he could not fail to command us to love and obey him. There is a harmony between these relations, and these duties,—a harmony which is not only perceived by us,—for to state that merely, would seem to make our perceptions the rule, if not the foundation, of duty,—but which is perceived by the perfect intellect of God himself. And since the relations we sustain were constituted by God, since he is the Judge of the affections and conduct which harmonize with these relations,—*that which appears right to Him, being right on that account,—rectitude may be regarded as conformity to the moral nature of God, the ultimate standard of virtue.*"(8)

To the revealed will of God we may now turn for information on the interesting subject of morals, and we shall find that the ethics of Christianity have a glory and perfection which philosophy has never heightened, and which its only true office is to display, and to keep before the attention of mankind.

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## CHAPTER II.

### THE DUTIES WE OWE TO GOD.

THE duties we owe to God are in Scripture summed up in the word "Godliness," the foundation of which, and of duties of every other kind, is that entire

SUBMISSION TO GOD, which springs from a due sense of that relation in which we stand to him, as creatures.

We have just seen that the right of an absolute sovereignty over us must, in the reason of the case, exist exclusively in Him that made us; and it is the perception and recognition of this, as a practical habit of the mind, which renders outward acts of obe-

(8) PATNE'S *Elements of Mental and Moral Science*.

dience sincere and religious. The will of God is the only rule to man, in every thing on which that will has declared itself; and, as it lays its injunctions upon the heart as well as the life, the rule is equally in force when it directs our *opinions*, our *motives*, and *affections*, as when it enjoins or prohibits external acts. We are his because he made us; and to this is added the confirmation of this right by our redemption: "Ye are not your own, but bought with a price; wherefore glorify God in your *bodies* and *spirits* which are *his*." These ideas of absolute right to command on the part of God, and of absolute obligation to universal obedience on the part of man, are united in the profession of St. Paul, "Whose I am and whom I serve;" and form the grand fundamental principle of "godliness" both in the Old and New Testament; the will of God being laid down in each, both as the highest *reason* and the most powerful motive to *obedience*. The application of this principle so established by the Scriptures will show how greatly superior is the ground on which Christianity places moral virtue to that of any other system. For,

1. The will of God, which is the rule of duty, is authenticated by the whole of that stupendous evidence which proves the Scriptures to be of divine original.

2. That will at once defines and enforces every branch of inward and outward purity, rectitude, and benevolence.

3. It annuls by its authority every other rule of conduct contrary to itself, whether it arise from custom, or from the example, persuasion, or opinions of others.

4. It is a rule which admits not of being lowered to the weak and fallen state of human nature; but, connecting itself with a gracious dispensation of supernatural help, it directs the morally imbecile to that remedy, and holds every one guilty of the violation of all that he is by nature and habit unable to perform, if that remedy be neglected.

5. It accommodates not itself to the interests or even safety of men; but requires that interest, honour, liberty, and life, should be surrendered, rather than it should sustain any violation.

6. It admits no exceptions in obedience; but requires it *whole* and *entire*; so that outward virtue cannot be taken in the place of that which has its seat in the heart; and it allows no acts to be really virtuous, but those which spring from a willing and submissive mind, and are done upon the vital principle of a distinct recognition of our rightful subjection to God.

LOVE TO GOD. To serve and obey God on the conviction that it is *right* to serve and obey him, is in Christianity joined with that



love to God which gives life and animation to service, and renders it the means of exalting our pleasures, at the same time that it accords with our convictions. The supreme love of God is the chief, therefore, of what have been called our *theopathic* affections. It is the sum and the end of law ; and though lost by us in Adam, is restored to us by Christ. When it regards God absolutely, and in himself, as a Being of infinite and harmonious perfections and moral beauties, it is that movement of the soul towards him which is produced by admiration, approval, and delight. When it regards him relatively, it fixes upon the ceaseless emanations of his goodness to us in the continuance of the existence which he at first bestowed ; the circumstances which render that existence felicitous ; and, above all, upon that "great love wherewith he loved us," manifested in the gift of his Son for our redemption, and in saving us by his grace ; or, in the forcible language of St. Paul, upon "the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness to us through Christ Jesus." Under all these views an unbounded gratitude overflows the heart which is influenced by this spiritual affection. But the love of God is more than a sentiment of gratitude. It rejoices in his perfections and glories, and devoutly contemplates them as the highest and most interesting subjects of thought ; it keeps the idea of this supremely-beloved object constantly present to the mind ; it turns to it with adoring ardour from the business and distractions of life ; it connects it with every scene of majesty and beauty in nature, and with every event of general and particular providence ; it brings the soul into fellowship with God, real and sensible, because vital ; it moulds the other affections into conformity with what God himself wills or prohibits, loves or hates ; it produces an unbounded desire to please him, and to be accepted of him in all things ; it is jealous of his honour, unwearied in his service, quick to prompt to every sacrifice in the cause of his truth and his Church ; and it renders all such sacrifices, even when carried to the extent of suffering and death, unreluctant and cheerful. It chooses God as the chief good of the soul, the enjoyment of which assures its perfect and eternal interest and happiness. "Whom have I in heaven but thee ? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee," is the language of every heart, when its love of God is true in principle and supreme in degree.

If, then, the will of God is the perfect rule of morals ; and if supreme and perfect love to God must produce a prompt, an unwearied, a delightful subjection to his will, or rather, an entire and most free choice of it as the rule of all our principles, affections, and actions ; the importance of this affection in securing that

obedience to the law of God in which true morality consists, is manifest; and we clearly perceive the reason why an inspired writer has affirmed, that "love is the fulfilling of the law." The necessity of keeping this subject before us under those views in which it is placed in the Christian system, and of not surrendering it to mere philosophy, is, however, an important consideration. With the philosopher the love of God may be the mere approval of the intellect; or a sentiment which results from the contemplation of infinite perfection, manifesting itself in acts of power and goodness. In the Scriptures it is much more than either, and is produced and maintained by a different process. We are there taught that "the carnal mind is enmity to God;" and is not of course capable of loving God. Yet this carnal mind may consist with deep attainments in philosophy, and with strongly impassioned poetic sentiment. The mere approval of the understanding; and the susceptibility of being impressed with feelings of admiration, awe, and even pleasure, when the character of God is manifested in his works, as both may be found in the carnal mind which is enmity to God, are not therefore the love of God. They are principles which enter into that love, since it cannot exist without them; but they may exist without this affection itself, and be found in a vicious and unchanged nature. The love of God is a fruit of the Holy Spirit; that is, it is implanted by him only in the souls which he has regenerated; and, as that which excites its exercise is chiefly, and in the first place, a sense of the benefits bestowed by the grace of God in our redemption, and a well-grounded persuasion of our personal interest in those benefits, it necessarily presupposes our personal reconciliation to God through faith in the atonement of Christ, and that attestation of it to the heart by the Spirit of Adoption of which we have before spoken. We here see, then, another proof of the necessary connexion of Christian morals with Christian doctrine, and how imperfect and deceptive every system must be which separates them. Love is essential to true obedience; for when the Apostle declares love to be "the fulfilling of the law," he declares, in effect, that the law cannot be fulfilled without love; and that every action which has not this for its principle, however virtuous in its show, fails of accomplishing the precepts which are obligatory upon us. But this love to God cannot be felt so long as we are sensible of his wrath, and are in dread of his judgments. These feelings are incompatible with each other, and we must be assured of his reconciliation to us, before we are capable of loving him. Thus the very existence of the love of God implies the doctrines of the atonement, repentance, faith, and

the gift of the Spirit of Adoption to believers; and unless it be taught in this connexion, and through this process of experience, it will be exhibited only as a bright and beautiful object to which man has no access; or a fictitious and imitative sentimentalism will be substituted for it, to the delusion of the souls of men.

A third leading duty is,

**TRUST IN GOD.** All creatures are dependent upon God for being and for well being. Inanimate and irrational beings hold their existence and the benefits which may accompany it, independently of any conditions to be performed on their part. Rational creatures are placed under another rule, and their felicity rests only upon their obedience. Whether, as to those intelligences who have never sinned, specific exercises of trust are required as a duty comprehended in their general obedience, we know not. But as to men, the whole Scripture shows, that faith or trust is a duty of the first class, and that they "stand only by faith." Whether the reason of this may be the importance to themselves of being continually impressed with their dependence upon God, so that they may fly to him at all times, and escape the disappointments of self confidence, and creature reliances; or that as all good actually comes from God, he ought to be recognised as its source, so that all creatures may glorify him; or whether other and more secret reasons may also be included; the fact, that this duty is solemnly enjoined as an essential part of true religion, cannot be doubted. Nor can the connexion of this habit of devoutly confiding in God with our peace of mind be overlooked. We have so many proofs of the weakness both of our intellectual and physical powers, and see ourselves so liable to the influence of combinations of circumstances which we cannot control, and of accidents which we cannot resist, that, unless we had assurances of being guided, upheld, and defended by a Supreme Power, we might become, and that not unreasonably, a prey to constant apprehensions, and the sport of the most saddening anticipations of the imagination. Our sole remedy from these would, in fact, only be found in insensibility and thoughtlessness; for to a reflecting and awakened mind, nothing can shut out uneasy fears, but faith in God. In all ages therefore this has been the resource of devout men: "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble; therefore will we not fear," &c, Psalm xli, 1. "Our fathers trusted in thee, and thou didst deliver them; they cried unto thee, and were delivered; they trusted in thee, and were not confounded." And from our Lord's sermon on the mount it is clear, that one end of his teaching was to deliver men from the piercing anxieties which the perplexi-



ties of this life are apt to produce, by encouraging them to confide in the care and bounty of their "Heavenly Father."

Our trust in God is enjoined in as many respects as he has been pleased to give us assurances of help, and promises of favour, in his own word. Beyond that, trust would be presumption, as not having authority; and to the full extent in which his gracious purposes towards us are manifested, it becomes a duty. And here too the same connexion of this duty with the leading doctrines of our redemption, which we have remarked under the last particular, also displays itself. If morals be taught independent of religion, either assiance in God must be excluded from the list of duties towards God, or otherwise it will be inculcated without effect. A man who is conscious of unremitted sins, and who must therefore regard the administration of the Ruler of the world, as to him punitive and vengeful, can find no ground on which to rest his trust. All that he can do is to hope that his relations to this Being may in future become more favourable; but, for the present, his fears must prevent the exercise of his faith. What course then lies before him, but in the first instance to seek the restoration of the favour of his offended God, in that method which he has prescribed, namely, by repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ? Till a scriptural assurance is obtained of that change in his relations to God which is effected by the free and gracious act of forgiveness, all the reasons of general trust in the care, benediction, and guidance of God, are vain as to him; because they are not applicable to his case. But when friendship is restored between the parties, faith, however unlimited, has the highest reason. It is then "a sure confidence in the mercy of God through Christ," as that mercy manifests itself in all the promises which God has been pleased to make to his children, and in all those condescending relations with which he has been pleased to invest himself, that under such manifestations he might win and secure our reliance. It is then the confidence not merely of creatures in a beneficent Creator, or of subjects in a gracious Sovereign, but of children in a Parent. It respects the supply of every want, temporal and eternal; the wise and gracious ordering of our concerns; the warding off, or the mitigation of calamities and afflictions; our preservation from all that can *upon the whole* be injurious to us; our guidance through life; our hope in death; and our future felicity in another world. This trust is a *duty* because it is a subject of command; and also because, after such demonstrations of kindness, distrust would imply a dishonourable denial of the love and faithfulness of God, and often also a criminal dependence upon

the creature. It is a habit essential to piety. On that condition we "obtain promises," by making them the subjects of prayer ; by its influence anxieties destructive to that calm contemplative habit of which true religion is both the offspring and the nurse, are expelled from the heart ; a spiritual character is thus given to man, who walks as seeing "Him who is invisible ;" and a noble and cheerful courage is infused into the soul, which elevates it above all cowardly shrinking from difficulty, suffering, pain, and death, and affords a practical exemplification of the exhortation of one who had tried the value of this grace in a great variety of exigencies : "Wait upon the Lord, be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart ; wait, I say, upon the Lord."

THE FEAR OF GOD is associated with Love, and Trust, in every part of Holy Scripture ; and is enjoined upon us as another of our leading duties.

This, however, is not a servile passion ; for then it could not consist with Love to God, and with delight and affiance in him. It is true that "the fear which hath torment ;" that which is accompanied with painful apprehensions of his displeasure arising from a just conviction of our personal liability to it, is enjoined upon the careless and the impious. To produce this, the word of God fulminates in threatenings, and his judgments march through the earth, exhibiting terrible examples of vengeance against one nation or individual for the admonition of others. But that fear of God which arises from apprehension of personal punishment, is not designed to be the habit of the mind ; nor is it included in the frequent phrase, "the fear of the Lord," when that is used to express the whole of practical religion, or its leading principles. In that case its nature is, in part, expressed by the term "Reverence," which is a due and humbling sense of the divine Majesty, produced and maintained in a mind regenerated by the Holy Spirit, by devout meditations upon the perfections of his infinite nature, his eternity and omniscience, his constant presence with us in every place, the depths of his counsels, the might of his power, the holiness, truth, and justice of his moral character ; and on the manifestations of these glories in the works of that mighty visible nature with which we are surrounded, in the government of angels, devils, and men, and in the revelations of his inspired word.

With this deeply reverential awe of God, is, however, constantly joined in Scripture, a persuasion of our *conditional* liability to his displeasure. For since all who have obtained his mercy and favour by Christ, receive those blessings through an atonement, which itself demonstrates that we are under a righteous adminis-

tration, and that neither is the Law of God repealed, nor does his Justice sleep ; and further, since the saving benefits of that atonement are conditional, and we ourselves have the power to turn aside the benefit of its interposition from us, or to forfeit it when once received, in whole or in part, it is clear that whilst there is a full provision for our deliverance from the "spirit of bondage unto fear;" there is sufficient reason why we ought to be so impressed with our spiritual dangers, as to produce in us that cautionary fear of the holiness, justice and power of God, which shall deter us from offending, and lead us often to view, with a restraining and salutary dread, those consequences of unfaithfulness and disobedience to which, at least whilst we remain on earth, we are liable. Powerful, therefore, as are the reasons by which the scriptural revelation of the mercy and benevolence of God enforces a firm affiance in him, it exhorts us not to be "high-minded," but to "fear;" to "fear" lest we "come short" of the "promise" of entering "into his rest;" to be in "the fear of the Lord all the day long;" and to pass the whole time of our "sojourning" here "in fear."

This scriptural view of the Fear of God, as combining both reverence of the Divine Majesty, and a suitable apprehension of our *conditional* liability to his displeasure, is of large practical influence.

It restrains our faith from degenerating into presumption ; our love into familiarity ; our joy into carelessness. It nurtures humility, watchfulness, and the spirit of prayer. It induces a reverent habit of thinking and speaking of God, and gives solemnity to the exercises of devotion. It presents sin to us under its true aspect, as dangerous, as well as corrupting to the soul ; as darkening our prospects in a future life, as well as injurious to our peace in the present ; and it gives strength and efficacy to that most important practical moral principle, the constant reference of our inward habits of thought and feeling, and our outward actions, to the approbation of God.

Upon these internal principles that moral habit and state, which is often expressed by the term HOLINESS, rests. Separate from these principles, it can only consist in visible acts, imperfect in themselves, because not vital, and, however commended by men, abominable to God who trieth the heart. But when such acts proceed from these sources, they are proportioned to the strength and purity of the principle which originates them, except as in some cases they may be influenced and deteriorated by an uninformed or weak judgment. An entire submission to God ; a



“perfect love” to him ; firm affiance in his covenant engagements ; and that fear which abases the spirit before God, and departs even from “the appearance of evil,” when joined with a right understanding of the word of God, render “the man of God perfect,” and “thoroughly furnish him to every good work.”

Besides these inward principles and affections, there are, however, several other habits and acts, a public performance of which, as well as their more secret exercises, have been termed by Divines OUR EXTERNAL DUTIES towards God ; the term “external” being, however, so used as not to exclude those exercises of the heart from which they must all spring if acceptable to God. The first is,

PRAYER, which is a solemn addressing of our minds to God, as the Fountain of being and happiness, the Ruler of the world, and the Father of the family of man. It includes in it the acknowledgment of the divine perfections and sovereignty ; thankfulness for the mercies we have received ; penitential confession of our sins ; and an earnest entreaty of blessings, both for ourselves and others. When vocal it is an external act, but supposes the correspondence of the will and affection ; yet it may be purely mental, all the acts of which it is composed being often conceived in the mind, when not clothed in words.

That the practice of prayer is enjoined upon us in Scripture, is sufficiently proved by a few quotations : “Ask, and it shall be given you ; seek, and ye shall find ; knock, and it shall be opened,” Matt. vii, 7. “Watch ye therefore and pray always,” Luke xxi, 36. “Be careful for nothing ; but, in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God,” Phil. iv, 6. “Pray without ceasing,” 1 Thess. v, 17. That prayer necessarily includes earnestness, and that perseverance which is inspired by strong desire, is evident from the Jews being so severely reprovèd for “drawing near to God with their lips, whilst their *hearts* were far from him :”—from the general rule of our Lord laid down in his conversation with the woman of Sychar : “God is a Spirit ; and they that worship him, must worship him in *spirit* and in *truth*,” John iv, 24,—and, from Romans xii, 12, “Continuing instant in prayer.” Here the term, *προσκαρτεροῦντες*, is very energetic, and denotes, as Chrysostom observes, “fervent, persevering, and earnest prayer.” Our Lord also delivered a parable to teach us that we ought “to pray and not faint ;” and we have examples of the success of reiterating our petitions, when for some time they appear disregarded. One of these is afforded in the case of the woman of Canaan, a first and a second time repulsed by our Lord ; and another occurs in 2 Cor. xii, 8, 9,

“For this I besought the Lord *thrice* that it might depart from me ; and he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee,” &c. This passage also affords an instance of praying distinctly for particular blessings, a practice which accords also with the direction in Phil. iv, 6, to make our “requests known unto God,” which includes not only our desires for good generally ; but also those particular requests which are suggested by special circumstances. Directions to pray for national and public blessings occur in Psalm cxxii, 6, “Pray for the peace of Jerusalem, they shall prosper that love thee :” in Zech. x, 1, “Ask ye of the Lord rain in the time of the latter rain ; so the Lord shall make bright clouds,” (or lightnings,) “and give them showers of rain, to every one grass in the field :” in 1 Tim. ii, 1–3, “I exhort therefore that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men ; for kings, and for all that are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty ; for this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour,” &c. More particular intercession for others is also authorized and enjoined : “Peter was therefore kept in prison ; but prayer was made without ceasing of the Church unto God for him,” Acts xii, 5. “Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ’s sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me ; that I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judea,” &c, Rom. xv, 30. “Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed,” James v, 16.

It follows, therefore, from these scriptural passages, that prayer is a duty ; that it is made a condition of our receiving good at the hand of God ; that every case of personal pressure, or need, may be made the subject of prayer ; that we are to intercede for all immediately connected with us, for the Church, for our country, and for all mankind ; that both temporal and spiritual blessings may be the subject of our supplications ; and that these great and solemn exercises are to be accompanied with grateful thanksgivings to God as the author of all blessings already bestowed, and the benevolent object of our hope as to future interpositions and supplies. Prayer, in its particular Christian view, is briefly and well defined in the Westminster Catechism,—“Prayer is the offering of our desires to God for things agreeable to his will, in the name of Christ, with confession of our sins, and a thankful acknowledgment of his mercies.”

The REASON on which this great and efficacious duty rests, has been a subject of some debate. On this point, however, we have

nothing explicitly stated in the Scriptures. From them we learn only, that God has appointed it ; that he enjoins it to be offered in faith, that is, faith in Christ, whose atonement is the meritorious and procuring cause of all the blessings to which our desires can be directed ; and that prayer so offered is an indispensable condition of our obtaining the blessings for which we ask. As a matter of inference, however, we may discover some glimpses of the reason in the Divine Mind on which its appointment rests. That reason has sometimes been said to be the moral preparation and state of fitness produced in the soul for the reception of the divine mercies which the act, and, more especially, the habit of prayer, must induce. Against this stands the strong and, in a scriptural view, the fatal objection, that an efficiency is thus ascribed to the mere act of a creature to produce those great, and in many respects, radical changes in the character of man, which we are taught, by inspired authority, to refer to the direct influences of the Holy Spirit. What is it that fits man for forgiveness, but simply repentance ? yet that is expressly said to be the “*gift*” of Christ, and supposes strong operations of the illuminating and convincing Spirit of Truth, the Lord and Giver of spiritual life ; and if the mere acts and habit of prayer had efficiency enough to produce a scriptural repentance, then every formalist attending with ordinary seriousness to his devotions, must in consequence, become a penitent. Again, if we pray for spiritual blessings aright, that is, with an earnestness of desire which arises from a due apprehension of their importance, and a preference of them to all earthly good, who does not see that this implies such a deliverance from the earthly and carnal disposition which characterizes our degenerate nature, that an agency far above our own, however we may employ it, must be supposed ; or else, if our own prayers could be efficient up to this point, we might, by the continual application of this instrument, complete our regeneration, independent of that grace of God, which, after all, this theory brings in. It may indeed be said that the grace of God operates by our prayers to produce in us a state of moral fitness to receive the blessings we ask. But this gives up the point contended for, the moral efficiency of prayer ; and refers the efficiency to another agent working by our prayers as an instrument. Still, however, it may be affirmed, that the Scriptures nowhere represent prayer as an instrument for improving our moral state, though in the hands of divine grace, in any other way than as the means of bringing into the soul new supplies of spiritual life and strength. It is therefore more properly to be considered as a condition of our obtaining that grace by which such effects are wrought, than as



the instrument by which it effects them. In fact, all genuine acts of prayer depend upon a grace previously bestowed, and from which alone the disposition and the power to pray proceed. So it was said of Saul of Tarsus, "Behold he prayeth!" He prayed in fact then for the first time; but that was in consequence of the illumination of his mind as to his spiritual danger effected by the miracle on the way to Damascus, and the grace of God which accompanied the miracle. Nor does the miraculous character of the means by which conviction was produced in his mind, affect the relevancy of this to ordinary cases. By whatever means God may be pleased to fasten the conviction of our spiritual danger upon our minds, and to awaken us out of the long sleep of sin, that conviction must precede real prayer, and comes from the influence of his grace, rendering the means of conviction effectual. Thus it is not the prayer which produces the conviction, but the conviction which gives birth to the prayer; and if we pursue the matter into its subsequent stages, we shall come to the same result. We pray for what we feel we want; that is, for something not in our possession; we obtain this either by impartation from God, to whom we look up as the only Being able to bestow the good for which we ask him; or else we obtain it, according to this theory, by some moral efficiency being given to the exercise of praying to work it in us. Now, the latter hypothesis is in many cases manifestly absurd. We ask for pardon of sin, for instance; but that is an act of God done *for* us, quite distinct from any moral change which prayer may be said to produce in us, whatever efficiency we may ascribe to it; for no such change in us can be pardon, since that must proceed from the party offended. We ask for increase of spiritual strength; and prayer is the expression of that want. But if it supply this want by its own moral efficiency, it must supply it in proportion to its intensity and earnestness; which intensity and earnestness can only be called forth by the degree in which the want is felt, so that the case supposed is contradictory and absurd, as it makes the sense of want to be in proportion to the supply which ought to abate or remove it. And if it be urged, that prayer at least produces in us a fitness for the supply of spiritual strength, because it is excited by a sense of our wants, the answer is, that the fitness contended for consists in that sense of want itself, which must be produced in us by the *previous* agency of grace, or we should never pray for supplies. There is, in fact, nothing in prayer simply which appears to have any adaptation, as an *instrument*, to effect a moral change in man, although it should be supposed to be made use of by the influence of the Holy Spirit. The word of

God is properly an instrument, because it contains the doctrine which that Spirit explains and applies, and the motives to faith and obedience which he enforces upon the conscience and affections; and though prayer brings these truths and motives before us, prayer cannot properly be said to be an instrument of our regeneration, because that which is thus brought by prayer to bear upon our case is the word of God itself introduced into our prayers, which derive their sole influence in that respect from that circumstance. Prayer simply is the application of an insufficient to a sufficient Being for the good which the former cannot otherwise obtain, and which the latter only can supply; and as that supply is dependent upon prayer, and in the nature of the thing consequent, prayer can in no good sense be said to be the instrument of supplying our wants, or fitting us for their supply, except relatively, as a mere condition appointed by the donor.

If we must inquire into the reason of the appointment of prayer, and it can scarcely be considered as a purely arbitrary institution, that reason seems to be, the preservation in the minds of men of a solemn and impressive sense of God's agency in the world, and the dependence of all creatures upon him. Perfectly pure and glorified beings, no longer in a state of probation, and therefore exposed to no temptations, may not need this institution; but men in their fallen state are constantly prone to forget God; to rest in the agency of second causes; and to build upon a sufficiency in themselves. This is at once a denial to God of the glory which he rightly claims, and a destructive delusion to creatures, who, in forsaking God as the object of their constant affiance, trust but in broken reeds, and attempt to drink from "broken cisterns which can hold no water." It is then equally in mercy to us, as in respect to his own honour and acknowledgment, that the Divine Being has suspended so many of his blessings, and those of the highest necessity to us, upon the exercise of prayer; an act which acknowledges his uncontrollable agency, and the dependence of all creatures upon him; our insufficiency, and his fulness; and lays the foundation of that habit of gratitude and thanksgiving which is at once so meliorating to our own feelings, and so conducive to a cheerful obedience to the will of God. And if this reason for the injunction of prayer is nowhere in Scripture stated in so many words, it is a principle uniformly supposed as the foundation of the whole scheme of religion which they have revealed.

To this duty objections have been sometimes offered, at which it may be well at least to glance.

One has been grounded upon a supposed predestination of all

things which come to pass ; and the argument is, that as this established predetermination of all things cannot be altered, prayer, which supposes that God will depart from it, is vain and useless. The answer which a pious Predestinarian would give to this objection is, That the argument drawn from the predestination of God lies with the same force against every other human effort, as against prayer ; and that as God's predetermination to give food to man does not render the cultivation of the earth useless and impertinent, so neither does the predestination of things shut out the necessity and efficacy of prayer. It would also be urged, that God has ordained the means as well as the end ; and although he is an unchangeable Being, it is a part of the unchangeable system which he has established, that prayer shall be heard and accepted.

Those who have not these views of predestination will answer the objection differently ; for if the premises of such a predestination as is assumed by the objection, and conceded in the answer, be allowed, the answer is unsatisfactory. The Scriptures represent God, for instance, as *purposing* to inflict a judgment upon an individual or a nation, which purpose is often changed by prayer. In this case either God's *purpose* must be denied, and then his threatenings are reduced to words without meaning ; or the purpose must be allowed, in which case either prayer breaks in upon predestination, if understood absolutely, or it is vain and useless. To the objection so drawn out it is clear that no answer is given by saying that the means as well as the end are predestinated, since prayer in such cases is not a means to the end, but an instrument of thwarting it ; or is a means to one end in opposition to another end, which, if equally predestinated with the same absoluteness, is a contradiction.

The true answer is, that although God has absolutely predetermined some things, there are others, which respect his government of free and accountable agents, which he has but conditionally predetermined. The true immutability of God, we have already showed, (9) consists, not in his adherence to his *purposes*, but in his never changing the *principles* of his administration ; and he may therefore in perfect accordance with his preordination of things, and the immutability of his nature, purpose to do, under certain conditions dependent upon the free agency of man, what he will not do under others ; and for this reason, that an immutable adherence to the *principles* of a wise, just, and gracious government, requires it. Prayer is in Scripture made one of these conditions ;



and if God has established it as one of the principles of his moral government to accept prayer, in every case in which he has given us authority to ask, he has not, we may be assured, entangled his actual government of the world with the bonds of such an eternal predestination of particular events, as either to reduce prayer to a mere form of words, or not to be able himself, consistently with his decrees, to answer it, whenever it is encouraged by his express engagements.

A second objection is, that as God is infinitely wise and good, his wisdom and justice will lead him to bestow "whatever is fit for us without praying; and if any thing be not fit for us, we cannot obtain it by praying." To this Dr. Paley very well replies, (1) "that it may be agreeable to perfect wisdom to grant that to our prayers which it would not have been agreeable to the same wisdom to have given us without praying for." This, independent of the question of the authority of the Scriptures which explicitly enjoin prayer, is the best answer which can be given to the objection; and it is no small confirmation of it, that it is obvious to every reflecting man, that for God to withhold favours till asked for, "tends," as the same writer observes, "to encourage devotion among his rational creatures, and to keep up and circulate a knowledge and sense of their dependency upon Him."

But it is urged, "God will always do what is *best* from the moral perfection of his nature, whether we pray or not." This objection, however, supposes that there is but one mode of acting for the best, and that the Divine will is necessarily determined to that mode only; "both which positions," says Paley, "presume a knowledge of universal nature, much beyond what we are capable of attaining." It is, indeed, a very unsatisfactory mode of speaking, to say, God will always do what is best; since we can conceive him capable in all cases of doing what is still better for the creature, and also that the creature is capable of receiving more and more from his infinite fulness for ever. All that can be rationally meant by such a phrase is, that, in the *circumstances* of the case, God will always do what is most consistent with his own wisdom, holiness, and goodness; but then the disposition to pray, and the act of praying, add a new circumstance to every case, and often bring many other new circumstances along with them. It supposes humility, contrition, and trust, on the part of the creature; and an acknowledgment of the power and compassion of God, and of the merit of the atonement of Christ: all which are manifestly new positions, so to speak, of

(1) *Moral Philosophy.*

the circumstances of the creature, which, upon the very principle of the objection, rationally understood, must be taken into consideration.

But if the efficacy of prayer as to ourselves be granted, its influence upon the case of others is said to be more difficult to conceive. This may be allowed without at all affecting the duty. Those who bow to the authority of the Scriptures, will see, that the duty of praying for ourselves and for others rests upon the same Divine appointment; and to those who ask for the reason of such intercession in behalf of others, it is sufficient to reply, that the efficacy of prayer being established in one case, there is the same reason to conclude that our prayers may benefit others, as any other effort we may use. It can only be by Divine appointment that one creature is made dependent upon another for any advantage, since it was doubtless in the power of the Creator to have rendered each independent of all but himself. Whatever reason, therefore, might lead him to connect and interweave the interests of one man with the benevolence of another, will be the leading reason for that kind of mutual dependence which is implied in the benefit of mutual prayer. Were it only that a previous sympathy, charity, and good will, are implied in the duty, and must, indeed, be cultivated in order to it, and be strengthened by it, the wisdom and benevolence of the institution would, it is presumed, be apparent to every well constituted mind. That all prayer for others must proceed upon a less perfect knowledge of them than we have of ourselves, is certain: that all our petitions must be, even in our own mind, more conditional than those which respect ourselves, though many of these must be subjected to the principles of a general administration, which we but partially apprehend; and that all spiritual influences upon others, when they are the subject of our prayers, will be understood by us as liable to the control of their free agency, must also be conceded; and, therefore, when others are concerned, our prayers may often be partially or wholly fruitless. He who believes the Scriptures will, however, be encouraged by the declaration, that "the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man," for his fellow creatures, "availeth much;" and he who demands something beyond mere authoritative declaration, as he cannot deny that prayer is one of those instruments by which another may be benefited, must acknowledge that, like the giving of counsel, it may be of great utility in some cases, although it should fail in others; and that as no man can tell how much good counsel may influence another, or in many cases say whether it has ultimately failed or not, so it is with prayer. It is a part of

the Divine plan, as revealed in his Word, to give many blessings to man independent of his own prayers, leaving the subsequent improvement of them to himself. They are given in honour of the intercession of Christ, man's great "Advocate;" and they are given, subordinately, in acceptance of the prayers of Christ's Church, and of righteous individuals. And when many, or few, devout individuals become thus the instruments of good to communities, or to whole nations, there is no greater mystery in this than in the obvious fact, that the happiness or misery of large masses of mankind is often greatly affected by the wisdom or the errors, the skill or the incompetence, the good or the bad conduct, of a few persons, and often of one.

The general duty of prayer is usually distributed into four branches,—*Ejaculatory, Private, Social, and Public*; each of which is of such importance as to require a separate consideration.

**EJACULATORY PRAYER** is the term given to those secret and frequent aspirations of the heart to God for general or particular blessings, by which a just sense of our habitual dependence upon God, and of our wants and dangers, may be expressed, at those intervals when the thoughts can detach themselves from the affairs of life, though but for a moment, whilst we are still employed in them. It includes, too, all those short and occasional effusions of gratitude, and silent ascriptions of praise, which the remembrance of God's mercies will excite in a devotional spirit, under the same circumstances. Both, however, presuppose what Divines have called, "the spirit of prayer," which springs from a sense of our dependence upon God, and is a breathing of the desires after intercourse of thought and affection with Him, accompanied with a reverential and encouraging sense of his constant presence with us. The cultivation of this spirit is clearly enjoined upon us as a duty by the Apostle Paul, who exhorts us to "pray without ceasing, and in every thing give thanks;" and also to "set our affections upon things above;"—exhortations which imply a holy and devotional frame and temper of mind, and not merely acts of prayer performed at intervals. The high and unspeakable advantages of this habit, are, that it induces a watchful and guarded mind; prevents religion from deteriorating into form without life; unites the soul to God, its light and strength; induces continual supplies of Divine influence; and opposes an effectual barrier, by the grace thus acquired, against the encroachments of worldly anxieties, and the force of temptations. The existence of this spirit of prayer and thanksgiving is one of the grand distinctions between nominal and real Christians; and by it the measure of vital and



effective Christianity enjoyed by any individual may ordinarily be determined.

**PRIVATE PRAYER.** This, as a duty, rests upon the examples of good men in Scripture; upon several passages of an injunctive character in the Old Testament; and, in the New, upon the express words of our Lord, which, whilst they suppose the practice of individual prayer to have been generally acknowledged as obligatory, enjoin that it should be strictly *private*. "But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, (2) and when thou hast shut the door, pray to thy Father which is in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly." In this respect, also, Christ has himself placed us under the obligation of his own example; the Evangelists having been inspired to put on record several instances of his retirement into absolute privacy, that he might "pray." The reason for this institution of private devotion appears to have been to incite us to a friendly and confiding intercourse with God in all those particular cases which most concern our feelings and our interests; and it is a most affecting instance of the condescension and sympathy of God, that we are thus allowed to use a freedom with him, in "pouring out our hearts," which we could not do with our best and dearest friends. It is also most worthy of our notice, that when this duty is enjoined upon us by our Lord, he presents the Divine Being before us under a relation most of all adapted to inspire that unlimited confidence with which he would have us to approach him:—"Pray to thy FATHER which is in secret." Thus is the dread of his Omniscience, indicated by his "seeing in secret," and of those other overwhelming attributes which Omnipresence and Omniscience cannot fail to suggest, mitigated, or only employed to inspire greater freedom, and a stronger affiance.

**FAMILY PRAYER.** Paley states the peculiar use of family prayer to consist in its influence upon servants and children, whose attention may be more easily commanded by this than by public worship. "The example and authority of a master and father act, also, in this way with greater force; and the ardour of devotion is better supported, and the sympathy more easily propagated through a small assembly, connected by the affections of domestic society, than in the presence of a mixed congregation." There is, doubtless, weight in these remarks; but they are defective, both in not stating the *obligation* of this important duty, and in not fully exhibiting its *advantages*.

(2) Εἰς τὸ ταπετὶον. Kuinoel observes, that the word "answers to the Hebrew חֶסֶד, an upper room set apart for retirement and prayer, among the Orientals."

The absence of an express precept for family worship has, it is true, been urged against its obligation even by some who have still considered it as a prudential and useful ordinance. But the strict obligation of so important a duty is not to be conceded for a moment, since it so plainly arises out of the very constitution of a family ; and is confirmed by the earliest examples of the Church of God. On the first of these points the following observations, from a very able and interesting work, (3) are of great weight :—

“The disposition of some men, professing Christianity, to ask peremptorily for a *particular precept* in all cases of incumbent moral duty, is one which every Christian would do well to examine ; not only that he may never be troubled with it himself, but that he may be at no loss in answering such a man, if he is called to converse with him. The particular duty to which he refers,—say, for example, family worship,—is comparatively of small account. His question itself is indicative not merely of great ignorance ; it is symptomatic of the want of religious principle. When a man says that he can *only* be bound to such a duty, a moral duty, by a positive and particular precept, I am satisfied that *he* could not perform it, in obedience to any precept whatever ; nor could he even now, though he were to try. The truth is, that this man has no disposition towards such worship, and he rather requires to be informed of the grounds of all such obligation.

“The duty of family devotion, therefore, let it be remembered, though it had been minutely enjoined as to both substance and season, would not, after all, have been founded only on such injunctions. I want the reader thoroughly to understand the *character* of a Christian, the *constitution* of the family ; and out of this character and that constitution, he will find certain duties to arise *necessarily* ; that is, they are essential to the continuance and well-being of himself as a Christian parent, and of the constitution over which he is set. In this case there can be no question as to their obligation, and for a precept there is no necessity. The Almighty, in his word, has not only said nothing in vain, but nothing except what is necessary. Now, as to family worship, for a particular precept I have no wish ; no, not even for the sake of *others*, because I am persuaded that the Christian, in his sober senses, *will* naturally obey, and no other *can*.

“To apply, however, this request for a precise precept to some other branches of family duty : What would be thought of me, were I to demand an express precept to enforce my obligation to feed

my children, and another to oblige me to clothe them? one to express my obligation to teach them the use of letters, and another to secure my training them to lawful or creditable professions or employments? ‘All this,’ very properly you might reply, ‘is absurd in the highest degree; your obligation rests on much higher ground; nay, doth not *nature* itself teach you in this, and much more than this?’ ‘Very true,’ I reply; ‘and is *renewed nature*, then, not to teach me far more still? To what other nature are such words as these addressed?—*Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.*’

“Independently, however, of all this evidence with any rational Christian parent, I may confirm and establish his mind on much higher ground than even that which these pointed examples afford. To such a parent I might say, ‘Without hesitation, you will admit that your obligations to your family are to be measured now, and on the day of final account, by your *capacity*,—as a man by your natural, as a Christian by your spiritual, capacity? and, however you may feel conscious of falling short daily, that you are under obligation to honour God to the utmost limit of this capacity? You will also allow that, standing where you do, you are not now, like a solitary orphan without relatives, to be regarded only as a single individual. God himself, your Creator, your Saviour, and your Judge, regards you as the *head* of a *family*; and, therefore, in possession of a sacred trust; you have the care of souls? Now if you really do measure obligation by capacity, then you will also at once allow, that you must do what you can, that He may, from your family, have as much honour as possible.

“ ‘Without hesitation you will also allow that God daily *preserves* you? And does he not also preserve your family? But if he preserves, he has a right of property in each and all under your roof. Shall He not, therefore, have from you acknowledgment of this? If daily he preserves, shall he not be daily acknowledged? And if acknowledged at all, how ought he to be so, if not upon your knees? And how can they know this, if they do not *hear* it?

“ ‘Without hesitation you will also allow that you are a *social* as well as a reasonable being? And often have you, therefore, felt how much the soothing influence of their sweet society has sustained you under your cares and trials, and grief itself. O! surely then, as a social being, you owe to them social worship; nor should you ever forget, that, in ancient days, there *was* social worship here before it could be any where else.’ ”



The same excellent writer has not, in his subsequent argument, given to the last remark in the above quotation all the force which it demands; for that social worship existed before worship more properly called public, that is, worship in indiscriminate assemblies, is the point which when followed out, most fully establishes the obligation. A great part, at least, of the worship of the patriarchal times was domestic. The worship of God was observed in the families of Abraham, Jacob, and Job; nay, the highest species of worship, the offering of sacrifices, which it could not have been without Divine appointment. It arose, therefore, out of the original constitution of a family, that the father and natural head was invested with a sacred and religious character, and that with reference to his family; and if this has never been revoked by subsequent prohibition; but on the contrary, if its continuance has been subsequently recognised; then the family priesthood continues in force, and stands on the same ground as several other religious obligations, which have passed from one dispensation of revealed religion to another, without express re-enactment.

Let us then inquire, whether any such revocation of this office, as originally vested in the father of a family, took place after the appointment of a particular order of Priests under the Mosaic economy. It is true that *national* sacrifices were offered by the Aaronical Priests, and perhaps some of those consuetudinary sacrifices, which, in the patriarchal ages, were offered by the heads of families, and had reference specially to the general dispensation of religion under which every family was equally placed; yet the passover was a solemn religious act, the domestic nature of which is plainly marked, and it was to be an ordinance for ever, and therefore was not taken out of the hands of the heads of families by the institution of the Aaronical Priesthood, although the ceremony comprehended several direct acts of worship. The solemn instruction of the family is also in the Law of Moses enjoined upon the father, "Thou shalt teach them diligently to thy children;" and he was also directed to teach them the import of the different festivals, and other commemorative institutions. Thus the original relation of the father to his family, which existed in the patriarchal age, is seen still in existence, though changed in some of its circumstances by the law. He is still the religious teacher; still he offers prayers for them to God; and still "blesses,"—an act which imports both prayer, praise, and *official* benediction. So the family of Jesse had a yearly sacrifice, 1 Sam. xx, 6. So David, although not a Priest, returned to "bless his household;" and our Lord filled the office of the master of a family, as appears from his eating

the passover with his disciples, and presiding as such over the whole rite : And although the passage, " Pour out thy fury upon the Heathen, and upon the *families* which call not upon thy name," Jer. x, 25, does not perhaps decidedly refer to acts of domestic worship, yet it is probable that the phraseology was influenced by that practice among the pious Jews themselves ;—neither did the Heathen nationally, nor in their families, acknowledge God. Nor is it a trifling confirmation of the ancient practice of a formal and visible domestic religion, that in Paganism, which corrupted the forms of the true religion, and especially those of the patriarchal dispensation, we see the signs of a family as well as a public idolatry, as exhibited in their private " chambers of imagery," their household deities ; and the religious ceremonies which it was incumbent upon the head of every house to perform.

The sacred character and office of the father and master of a household, passed from Judaism into Christianity ; for here, also, we find nothing which revokes and repeals it. A duty so well understood both among Jews and even Heathens, as that the head of the house ought to influence its religious character, needed no special injunction. The father or master who believed was baptized, and all his " house ;" the first religious societies were chiefly domestic ; and the antiquity of domestic religious services among Christians, leaves it unquestionable, that, when the number of Christians increased so as to require a separate assembly in some common room or church, the domestic worship was not superseded. But for the division of verses in the fourth chapter of the Epistle to the Colossians, it would scarcely have been suspected that the first and second verses contained two distinct and unconnected precepts,—“ Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal, knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven ; continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving ;” a collocation of persons and duties which seems to intimate that the sense of the Apostle was, that the “ servant,” the slave, should partake of the benefit of those continual prayers and daily thanksgivings which it is enjoined upon the master to offer.

As the *obligation* to this branch of devotion is passed over by Paley, so the *advantages* of family worship are but very imperfectly stated by him. The offering of prayer to God in a family cannot but lay the ground of a special regard to its interests and concerns on the part of Him, who is thus constantly acknowledged ; and the advantage, therefore, is more than a mere sentimental one ; and more than that of giving effect to the “ master’s example.” The blessings of providence and of grace ; defence against evil, or

peculiar supports under it; may thus be expected from Him, who has said, "In all thy ways acknowledge him, and He shall direct thy paths;" and that when two or three are met in his name, He is "in the midst of them." The family is a "church in a house;" and its ministrations, as they are acceptable to God, cannot but be followed by his direct blessing.

**PUBLIC PRAYER**, under which we include the assembling of ourselves together for every branch of public worship.

The scriptural obligation of this is partly founded upon example, and partly upon precept; so that no person who admits that authority, can question this great duty without manifest and criminal inconsistency. The institution of public worship under the law; the practice of synagogue worship among the Jews, from at least the time of Ezra, (4) cannot be questioned; both which were sanctioned by the practice of our Lord and his Apostles. The course of the synagogue worship became indeed the model of that of the Christian Church. It consisted in prayer, reading and explaining the Scriptures, and singing of psalms; and thus one of the most important means of instructing nations, and of spreading and maintaining the influence of morals and religion among a people, passed from the Jews into all Christian countries.

The preceptive authority for our regular attendance upon public worship, is either *inferential* or *direct*. The command to publish the Gospel includes the obligation of assembling to hear it; the name by which a Christian society is designated in Scripture, is a *Church*; which signifies an "assembly" for the transaction of some business; and, in the case of a Christian assembly, the business must be necessarily spiritual, and include the sacred exercises of prayer, praise, and hearing the Scriptures. But we have more *direct* precepts, although the practice was obviously continued from Judaism, and was therefore consuetudinary. Some of the Epistles of Paul are commanded to be read in the Churches. The singing of psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, is enjoined as an act of solemn worship "to the Lord;" and St. Paul cautions the Hebrews that they "forsake not the assembling of themselves together." The practice of the primitive age is also manifest from the Epistles of St. Paul. The Lord's Supper was celebrated by the body of believers collectively; and this Apostle prescribes to the Corinthians regulations for the exercises of prayer and prophesyings, "when they came together in the church,"—the assembly. The stated-

(4) Some writers contend that synagogues were as old as the ceremonial law. That they were *ancient* is proved from Acts xv, 21,—"*Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath day.*"



ness and order of these "holy offices" in the primitive Church, appears also from the Apostolical Epistle of St. Clement: "We ought also, looking into the depths of the Divine knowledge, to do all things in order, whatsoever THE LORD hath *commanded* to be done. We ought to make our oblations, and perform our holy offices, at their appointed seasons; for these he hath *commanded* to be done, not irregularly or by chance, but at determinate times and hours; as he hath likewise *ordained* by his *Supreme Will*, where, and by what persons, they shall be performed; that so all things being done according to his pleasure, may be acceptable in his sight." This passage is remarkable for urging a Divine authority for the public services of the Church, by which St. Clement, no doubt, means the authority of the inspired directions of the Apostles.

The ends of the institution of public worship are of such obvious importance, that it must ever be considered as one of the most condescending and gracious dispensations of God to man. By this his Church confesses his name before the world; by this the public teaching of his word is associated with acts calculated to affect the mind with that solemnity which is the best preparation for hearing it to edification. It is thus that the ignorant and vicious are collected together, and instructed and warned; the invitations of mercy are published to the guilty, and the sorrowful and afflicted are comforted. In these assemblies God, by his Holy Spirit, diffuses his vital and sanctifying influence, and takes the devout into a fellowship with himself, from which they derive strength to do and to suffer his will in the various scenes of life, whilst he thus affords them a foretaste of the deep and hallowed pleasures which are reserved for them at "his right hand for evermore." Prayers and intercessions are here heard for national and public interests; and whilst the benefit of these exercises descends upon a country, all are kept sensible of the dependence of every public and personal interest upon God. Praise calls forth the grateful emotions, and gives cheerfulness to piety; and that "instruction in righteousness," which is so perpetually repeated, diffuses the principles of morality and religion throughout society; enlightens and gives activity to conscience; raises the standard of morals; attaches shame to vice, and praise to virtue; and thus exerts a powerfully purifying influence upon mankind. Laws thus receive a force, which, in other circumstances, they could not acquire, even were they enacted in as great perfection; and the administration of justice is aided by the strongest possible obligation and sanction being given to legal oaths. The domestic relations are rendered

more strong and interesting by the very habit of the attendance of families upon the sacred services of the sanctuary of the Lord ; and the rich and the poor meeting together there, and standing on the same common ground of sinners before God, equally dependent upon him, and equally suing for his mercy, has a powerful, though often an insensible, influence in humbling the pride which is nourished by superior rank, and in raising the lower classes above abjectness of spirit, without injuring their humility. Piety, benevolence, and patriotism, are equally dependent for their purity and vigour upon the regular and devout worship of God in the simplicity of the Christian dispensation.

A few words on liturgies or forms of prayer may here have a proper place.

The necessity of adhering to the simplicity of the first age of the Church, as to worship, need scarcely be defended by argument. If no liberty were intended to be given to accommodate the modes of worship to the circumstances of different people and times, we should, no doubt, have had some express directory on the subject in Scripture ; but in the exercise of this liberty steady regard is to be paid to the spirit and genius and simple character of Christianity, and a respectful deference to the practice of the Apostles and their immediate successors. Without these, formality and superstition, to both of which human nature is very liable, are apt to be induced ; and when once they enter they increase, as the history of the Church sufficiently shows, indefinitely, until true religion is buried beneath the mass of observances which have been introduced as her aids and handmaids. Our Lord's own words are here directly applicable and important : " God is a Spirit ; and they that worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth." The worship must be adapted to the spiritual nature of God, and to his revealed perfections. To such a Being the number of prayers, the quantity of worship so to speak, to which corrupt Churches have attached so much importance, can be of no value. As a Spirit, he seeks the worship of the spirit of man ; and regards nothing external in that worship but as it is the expression of those emotions of humility, faith, gratitude, and hope, which are the principles he condescendingly approves in man. " True" worship, we are also taught by these words, is the worship of the heart ; it springs from humility, faith, gratitude, and hope ; and its final cause, or end, is to better man, by bringing upon his affections the sanctifying and comforting influence of grace. The modes of worship which best promote this end, and most effectually call these principles into exercise, are those therefore which best accord with our Lord's rule : and if in

the Apostolic age we see this end of worship most directly accomplished, and these emotions most vigorously and with greatest purity excited, the novelties of human invention can add nothing to the effect, and for that very reason have greatly diminished it. In the Latin and Greek Churches we see a striking conformity in the vestments, the processions, the pictures, and images, and other parts of a complex and gorgeous ceremonial, to the Jewish typical worship, and to that of the Gentiles, which was an imitation of it without typical meaning. But it is not even pretended that in these circumstances it is founded upon primitive practice ; or, if pretended, this is obviously an impudent assumption.

Liturgies, or forms of *Service*, do not certainly come under this censure, except when they contain superstitious acts of devotion to saints, or are so complicated, numerous, and lengthened, that the only principle to which they can be referred is the common, but unworthy notion, that the Divine Being is rendered placable by continued service ; or that the wearisome exercise of vocal prayers, continued for long periods, and in painful postures, is a necessary penance to man, and, as such, acceptable to God. In those Reformed Churches of Christendom in which they are used, they have been greatly abridged, as well as purified from the corruptions of the middle ages. In some they are more copious than in others, whilst many religious societies have rejected their use altogether ; and in a few they are so used as to afford competent space also for extempore devotion.

The advocates and opponents of the use of forms of prayer in public worship have both run into great extremes, and attempted generally to prove too much against each other.

If the use of forms of prayer in prose be objected to, their use in verse ought to be rejected on the same principle ; and extemporaneous psalms and hymns must, for consistency's sake, be required of a Minister, as well as extemporaneous prayers ; or the practice of singing, as a part of God's worship, must be given up. Again : If the objection to the use of a form of prayer be not in its matter ; but merely as it contains petitions not composed by ourselves, or by the officiating Minister on the occasion ; the same objection would lie to our using any petitions found in the Psalms or other devotional parts of Scripture, although adapted to our case, and expressed in words far more fitting than our own. If we think precomposed prayers incompatible with devotion, we make it essential to devotion that we should frame our desires into our own words ; whereas nothing can be more plain, than that whoever has composed the words, if they correspond with our desires, they



become the prayer of our hearts, and are, as such, acceptable to God. The objection to petitionary forms composed by others, supposes also that we know the things which it is proper for us to ask without the assistance of others. This may be sometimes the case; but as we must be taught what to pray for by the Holy Scriptures, so, in proportion as we understand what we are authorized to pray for by those Scriptures, our prayers become more varied, and distinct, and comprehensive, and, therefore, edifying. But all helps to the understanding of the Scriptures, as to what they encourage us to ask of God, is a help to us in prayer. Thus the exposition of Christian privileges and blessings from the pulpit, affords us this assistance; thus the public extempore prayers we hear offered by Ministers and enlightened Christians, assist us in the same respect; and the written and recorded prayers of the wise and pious in different ages, fulfil the same office, and to so great an extent, that scarcely any who offer extempore prayer escape falling into phrases and terms of expression, or even entire petitions, which have been originally derived from Liturgies. Even in extempore services, the child accustomed to the modes of precatory expression used by the parent, and the people to those of their Ministers, imitate them unconsciously; finding the desires of their hearts already embodied in suitable and impressive words.

The objection, therefore, to the use of forms of prayer, when absolute, is absurd, and involves principles which no one acts upon, or can act upon. It also disregards example and antiquity. The High Priest of the Jews pronounced yearly a form of benediction. The Psalms of David, and other inspired Hebrew Poets, whether chanted or read makes no difference, were composed for the use of the sanctuary, and formed a part of the regular devotions of the people. Forms of prayer were used in the synagogue service of the Jews, which, though multiplied in subsequent times, so as to render the service tedious and superstitious, had among them some that were in use between the return from the Captivity and the Christian era, and were therefore sanctioned by the practice of our Lord and his Apostles. (5) John Baptist appears also to have given a form of prayer to his disciples, in which he was followed by our Lord. The latter has indeed been questioned, and were it to be argued that our Lord intended that form of prayer alone to be used, too much would be proved by the advocates of forms. On the other hand, although the words, “after this *manner* pray ye,” intimate that the Lord’s Prayer was given as a model of prayer,

(5) PRIDEAUX's *Connexion*. Fol. Edit. vol. i, p. 304.

so the words in another Evangelist, "When ye pray, say," as fully indicate an intention to prescribe a form. It seems, therefore, fair, to consider the Lord's Prayer as intended both as a *model* and a *form*; and he must be very fastidious who, though he uses it as the model of his own prayers, by paraphrasing its petitions in his own words, should scruple to use it in its native simplicity and force as a form. That its use as a form, though not its exclusive use, was originally intended by our Lord, appears, I think, very clearly, from the disciples desiring to be taught to pray, "as John taught his disciples." If, as it has been alleged, the Jewish Rabbies, at so early a period, were in the custom of giving short forms of prayer to their disciples, to be used in the form given, or to be enlarged upon by the pupil at his pleasure, this would fully explain the request of the disciples. However, without laying much stress upon the antiquity of this practice, we may urge, that if John Baptist gave a form of prayer to his followers, the conduct of our Lord in teaching his disciples to pray, by what is manifestly a regularly connected series of petitions, is accordant with their request; but if the Baptist only taught what topics ought to be introduced in prayer, and the disciples of Jesus wished to be instructed in like manner, it is difficult to account for their request being granted, not by his giving directions as to the topics of prayer, but by his uttering a regular prayer itself. That our Lord intended that prayer to be used as adapted to that period of his dispensation; and that the petitions in that form are admirably applicable to every period of Christianity, and may be used profitably; and that its use implies a devout respect to the words of Him "who spake as never man spake;" are points from which there does not appear any reasonable ground of dissent.

The practice of the primitive Church may also be urged in favour of Liturgies. Founded as the early worship of Christians was, upon the model of the synagogue, the use of short forms of prayer, or collects, by them, is at least probable. It must indeed be granted that extended and regular Liturgies were of a later date; and that extempore prayers were constantly offered in their assemblies for public worship. This appears clear enough from several passages in St. Paul's Epistles, and the writings of the Fathers; so that no liturgical service can be so framed as entirely to shut out, or not to leave convenient space for, extempore prayer by the Minister without departing from the earliest models. But the Lord's Prayer appears to have been in frequent use in the earliest times, and a series of collects; which seems allowed even by Lord King, although he proves that the practice for the Minister

to pray "according to his ability,"(6) that is, to use his gifts in extempore prayer, was a constant part of the public worship in the first ages.

Much, therefore, is evidently left to wisdom and prudence in a case where we have no explicit direction in the Scriptures ; and as a general rule to be modified by circumstances, we may perhaps with safety affirm, that the best mode of public worship is that which unites a brief scriptural Liturgy with extempore prayers by the Minister. This will more clearly appear if we consider the exceedingly futile character of those objections which have been reciprocally employed by the opponents and advocates of forms, when they have carried their views to an extreme.

To public Liturgies it has been objected, that "forms of prayer composed in one age become unfit for another, by the unavoidable change of language, circumstances and opinions." To this it may be answered, 1. That whatever weight there may be in the objection, it can only apply to cases where the form is, in all its parts, made imperative upon the officiating Minister ; or where the Church imposing it, neglects to accommodate the Liturgy to meet all such changes, when innocent. 2. That the general language of no form of prayer among ourselves, has become obsolete in point of fact ; a few expressions only being, according to modern notions, uncouth, or unusual. 3. That the petitions they contain are suited, more or less, to all men at all times, whatever may be their "circumstances ;" and that as to "opinions," if they so change in a Church as to become unscriptural, it is an advantage arising out of a public form, that it is auxiliary to the Scriptures in bearing testimony against them ; that a natural reverence for ancient forms tends to preserve their use, after opinions have become lax ; and that they are sometimes the means of recovering a Church from error.

Another objection is, that the perpetual repetition of the same form of words produces weariness and inattentiveness in the congregation. There is some truth in this ; but it is often carried much too far. A devotional mind will not weary in the repetition of a scriptural and well-arranged Liturgy, if not too long to be sustained by the infirmity of the body. Whether forms are used, or extempore prayer be practised, effort and application of mind are necessary in the hearer to enter into the spirit of the words ; and each mode is wearisome to the careless and indevout, though not, we grant, in equal degrees. The objection, as far as it has

(6) This expression occurs in Justin Martyr's Second Apology, where he particularly describes the mode of primitive worship.



any weight, would be reduced to nothing, were the Liturgy repeated only at one service on the Sabbath, so that at the others the Minister might be left at liberty to pray with more direct reference to the special circumstances of the people, the Church, and the world.

The *general* character which all forms of prayer must take, is a third objection ; but this is not true absolutely of any Liturgy, and much less of that of the Church of England. All prayer must, and ought to be, general, because we ask for blessings which all others need as much as ourselves ; but that particularity which goes into the different parts of a Christian's religious experience and conflicts, dangers and duties, is found very forcibly and feelingly expressed in that Liturgy. That greater particularity is often needed than this excellent form of prayer contains, must, however, be allowed ; and this, as well as prayer suited to occasional circumstances, might be supplied by the more frequent use of extempore prayer, without displacing the Liturgy itself. The objection, therefore, has no force, except when extempore prayer is excluded, or confined within too narrow a limit.

On the other hand, the indiscriminate advocates of Liturgies have carried their objections to extempore prayer to a very absurd extreme. Without a Liturgy the folly and enthusiasm of many, they say, is in danger of producing extravagant or impious addresses to God ; that a congregation is confused between their attention to the Minister, and their own devotion, being ignorant of each petition before they hear it ; and to this they add the labouring recollection or tumultuous delivery of many extempore speakers. The first and third of these objections can have force only where foolish, enthusiastic, and incompetent Ministers are employed ; and so the evil, which can but rarely exist, is easily remedied. The second objection lay as forcibly against the inspired prayers of the Scriptures at the time they were first uttered, as against extempore prayers now ; and it would lie against the use of the collects, and occasional unfamiliar forms of prayer introduced into the regular Liturgy, in the case of all who are not able to read, or who happen not to have Prayerbooks. We may also observe, that if evils of so serious a kind are the necessary results of extempore praying ; if devotion is hindered, and pain and confusion of mind produced ; and impiety and enthusiasm promoted ; it is rather singular that extempore prayer should have been so constantly practised in the primitive Church, and that it should not have been wholly prohibited to the Clergy on all occasions, in later times. The facts, however, of our own age prove that there is, to say the

least, an equal degree of devotion, an equal absence of confusedness of thought in the worshippers, where no Liturgy is used, as where extempore prayer is unknown. Instances of folly and enthusiasm are also but few in the ministry of such Churches; and when they occur they have a better remedy than entirely to exclude extempore prayers by Liturgies, and thus to shut out the great benefits of that mode of worship, for the loss of which no exclusive form of service can atone.

The whole, we think, comes to this,—that there are advantages in each mode of worship; and that, when combined prudently, the public service of the sanctuary has its most perfect constitution. Much, however, in the practice of Churches is to be regulated by due respect to differences of opinion, and even to prejudice, on a point upon which we are left at liberty by the Scriptures, and which must therefore be ranked among things prudential. Here, as in many other things, Christians must give place to each other, and do all things “in charity.”

PRaise AND THANKSGIVING are implied in prayer, and included indeed in our definition of that duty, as given above. But beside those ascriptions of praise and expressions of gratitude, which are to be mingled with the precatory part of our devotions, solemn psalms and hymns of praise, to be sung with the voice, and accompanied with the melody of the heart, are of Apostolic injunction, and form an important and exhilarating part of the worship of God, whether public or social. It is thus that God is publicly acknowledged as the great source of all good, and the end to which all good ought again to tend in love and obedience; and the practice of stirring up our hearts to a thankful remembrance of His goodness, is equally important in its moral influence upon our feelings now, and as it tends to prepare us for our eternal enjoyment hereafter. “Prayer,” says a Divine of the English Church, “awakens in us a sorrowful sense of wants and imperfections, and confession induces a sad remembrance of our guilt and miscarriages; but thanksgiving has nothing in it but a warm sense of the mightiest love, and the most endearing goodness, as it is the overflow of a heart full of love, the free sally and emission of soul, that is captivated and endeared by kindness. To laud and magnify the Lord is the end for which we were born, and the heaven for which we were designed, and when we are arrived to such a vigorous sense of Divine love as the blessed inhabitants of heaven have attained, we shall need no other pleasure or enjoyment to make us for ever happy, but only to sing eternal praises to God and the Lamb; the vigorous relish of whose unspeakable goodness to us will so inflame

our love, and animate our gratitude, that to eternal ages we shall never be able to refrain from breaking out into new songs of praise, and then every new song will create a new pleasure, and every new pleasure create a new song.”(7)

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### CHAPTER III.

#### THE DUTIES WE OWE TO GOD.—THE LORD’S DAY.

As we have just been treating of the public worship of Almighty God, so we may fitly add some remarks upon the consecration of one day in seven for that service, that it may be longer continued than on days in which the business of life calls for our exertions, and our minds be kept free from its distractions.

The obligation of a Sabbatical institution upon Christians, as well as the extent of it, have been the subjects of much controversy. Christian Churches themselves have differed; and the Theologians of the same Church. Much has been written upon the subject on each side, and much research and learning employed, sometimes to darken a very plain subject.

The circumstance, that the observance of a Sabbath is no where, *in so many words*, enjoined upon Christians, by our Lord and his Apostles, has been assumed as the reason for so great a license of criticism and argument as that which has been often indulged in to unsettle the strictness of the obligation of this duty. Its obligation has been represented as standing upon the ground of inference only, and therefore of human opinion; and thus the opinion against Sabbatical institutions has been held up as equally weighty with the opinion in their favour; and the liberty which has been claimed, has been too often hastily concluded to be Christian liberty. This, however, is travelling much too fast; for if the case were as much a matter of inference, as such persons would have it, it does not follow that every inference is alike good; or that the opposing inferences have an equal force of truth, any more than of piety.

The question respects the will of God as to this particular point,—Whether one day in seven is to be wholly devoted to religion, exclusive of worldly business and worldly pleasures. Now, there are but two ways in which the will of God can be collected from his word; either by some explicit injunction upon all, or by incidental circumstances. Let us then allow for a moment, that we have no such explicit injunction; yet we have



certainly none to the contrary: Let us allow that we have only for our guidance in inferring the will of God in this particular, certain circumstances declarative of his will; yet this important conclusion is inevitable, that all such indicative circumstances are in favour of a Sabbatical institution, and that there is not one which exhibits any thing contrary to it. The seventh day was hallowed at the close of the creation; its sanctity was afterwards marked by the withholding of the manna on that day, and the provision of a double supply on the sixth, and that *previous* to the giving of the law from Sinai: It was then made a part of that great epitome of religious and moral duty, which God wrote with his own finger on tables of stone; it was a part of the public political law of the only people to whom Almighty God ever made himself a political Head and Ruler; its observance is connected throughout the prophetic age with the highest promises, its violations with the severest maledictions; it was among the Jews in our Lord's time a day of solemn religious assembling, and was so observed by Him; when changed to the first day of the week, it was the day on which the first Christians assembled; it was called, by way of eminence, "the Lord's day;" and we have inspired authority to say, that, both under the Old and New Testament dispensations, it is used as an expressive type of the heavenly and eternal rest. Now, against all these circumstances so strongly declarative of the will of God, as to the observance of a Sabbatical institution, what circumstance or passage of Scripture can be opposed, as bearing upon it a contrary indication? Truly not one; except those passages in St. Paul, in which he speaks of Jewish Sabbaths, with their Levitical rites, and of a distinction of days, both of which marked a weak or a criminal adherence to the abolished ceremonial dispensation; but which touch not the Sabbath as a branch of the moral law, or as it was changed, by the authority of the Apostles, to the first day of the week.

If, then, we were left to determine the point by inference merely, how powerful is the inference as to what is the will of God with respect to the keeping of the Sabbath on the one hand, and how totally unsupported is the opposite inference on the other!

It may also be observed, that those who will so strenuously insist upon the absence of an express command as to the Sabbath in the writings of the Evangelists and Apostles, as explicit as that of the Decalogue, assume, that the will of God is only obligatory when manifested in some one mode, which *they* judge to be most fit. But this is a monstrous hypothesis; for however the will of God may be manifested, if it is with such clearness as to exclude all

reasonable doubt, it is equally obligatory as when it assumes the formality of legal promulgation. Thus the Bible is not all in the form of express and authoritative command; it teaches by examples, by proverbs, by songs, by incidental allusions and occurrences; and yet is, throughout, a manifestation of the will of God as to morals and religion in their various branches, and if disregarded, it will be so at every man's peril.

But strong as this ground is, we quit it for a still stronger. It is wholly a mistake, that the Sabbath, because not re-enacted with the formality of the Decalogue, is not explicitly enjoined upon Christians, and that the testimony of Scripture to such an injunction is not unequivocal and irrefragable. We shall soon prove that the Sabbath was appointed at the creation of the world, and consequently for all men, and therefore for Christians; since there was never any repeal of the original institution. To this we add, that if the moral law be the law of Christians, then is the Sabbath as explicitly enjoined upon them as upon the Jews. But that the moral law is our law, as well as the law of the Jews, all but Antinomians must acknowledge; and few, we suppose, will be inclined to run into the fearful mazes of that error, in order to support lax notions as to the obligation of the Sabbath, into which, however, they must be plunged, if they deny the law of the Decalogue to be binding upon us. That it is so bound upon us, a few passages of Scripture will prove as well as many.

Our Lord declares, that he came not to destroy the Law and the Prophets, but to fulfil. Take it, that by the "Law," he meant both the moral and the ceremonial; ceremonial law could only be fulfilled in him, by realizing its types; and moral law, by upholding its authority. For "the Prophets," they admit of a similar distinction; they either enjoin morality, or utter prophecies of Christ; the latter of which were fulfilled in the sense of accomplishment, the former by being sanctioned and enforced. That the observance of the Sabbath is a part of the moral law, is clear from its being found in the Decalogue, the doctrine of which our Lord sums up in the moral duties of loving God and our neighbour; and for this reason the injunctions of the Prophets, on the subject of the Sabbath, are to be regarded as a part of their *moral* teaching. (8) Some Divines have, it is true, called the observance of the Sabbath a positive, and not a moral precept. If it were so, its obligation is precisely the same, in all cases where God himself has not relaxed it; and if a positive precept only, it has surely a special eminence given to it, by being placed in the list of the Ten Commandments, and being

(8) See this stated more at large, Part iii, chap. i.

capable, with them, of an epitome which resolves them into the love of God and our neighbour.(9) The truth seems to be, that it is a mixed precept, and not wholly positive ; but intimately, perhaps essentially, connected with several moral principles, of homage to God, and mercy to men ; with the obligation of religious *worship*, of *public* religious worship, and of *undistracted* public worship : and this will account for its collocation in the Decalogue with the highest duties of religion, and the leading rules of personal and social morality.

The passage from our Lord's Sermon on the Mount, with its context, is a sufficiently explicit enforcement of the moral law, generally, upon his followers ; but when he says, "The Sabbath was made for man," he clearly refers to its original institution, as a universal law, and not to its obligation upon the Jews only, in consequence of the enactments of the law of Moses. It "was made for *man*," not as he may be a Jew, or a Christian ; but as man, a creature bound to love, worship, and obey his God and Maker, and on his trial for eternity.

Another explicit proof that the law of the Ten Commandments, and, consequently, the law of the Sabbath, is obligatory upon Christians, is found in the answer of the Apostle to an objection to the doctrine of justification by faith, Rom. iii, 31, "Do we then make void the law through faith?" which is equivalent to asking, Does Christianity teach, that the law is no longer obligatory on Christians, because it teaches that no man can be justified by it? To this he answers, in the most solemn form of expression, "God forbid ; yea, we establish the law." Now, the sense in which the Apostle uses the term, "the law," in this argument, is indubitably marked in chap. vii, 7, "I had not known sin but by *the law* ; for I had not known lust, except *the law* had said, Thou shalt not covet :"

Which being a plain reference to the tenth command of the Decalogue, as plainly shows that the Decalogue is "*the law*" of which he speaks. This, then, is the law which is "*established*" by the Gospel ; and this can mean nothing else than the establishment and confirmation of its *authority*, as the rule of all inward and outward holiness. Whoever, therefore, denies the obligation of the Sabbath on Christians, denies the obligation of the whole Decalogue ; and there is no real medium between the acknowledgment of the Divine authority of this sacred institution, as a universal law, and that gross corruption of Christianity, generally designated Antinomianism.

(9) See Vol. ii, p. 196.



Nor is there any force in the dilemma into which the Anti-Sabbatarians would push us, when they argue, that, if the case be so, then are we bound to the same circumstantial exactitude of obedience as to this command, as to the other precepts of the Decalogue; and, therefore, that we are bound to observe the seventh day, reckoning from Saturday, as the Sabbath-day. But, as the command is partly positive, and partly moral, it may have circumstances which are capable of being altered in perfect accordance with the moral principles on which it rests, and the moral ends which it proposes. Such circumstances are not indeed to be judged of on our own authority. We must either have such general principles for our guidance as have been revealed by God, and cannot therefore be questioned, or some special authority from which there can be no just appeal. Now, though there is not on record any Divine command issued to the Apostles, to change the Sabbath from the day on which it was held by the Jews, to the first day of the week; yet, when we see that this was done in the Apostolic age, and that St. Paul speaks of the Jewish Sabbaths as not being obligatory upon Christians, whilst he yet contends that the whole moral law is obligatory upon them; the fair inference is, that this change of the day was made by Divine direction. It is at least more than inference, that the change was made under the sanction of inspired men; and those men, the appointed rulers in the Church of Christ; whose business it was to "set all things in order," which pertained to its worship and moral government. We may rest well enough, therefore, satisfied with this,—that as a Sabbath is obligatory upon us, we act under Apostolic authority for observing it on the first day of the week, and thus commemorate at once the creation and the redemption of the world.

Thus, even if it were conceded, that the change of the day was made by the agreement of the Apostles, without express directions from Christ, (which is not probable,) it is certain that it was not done without *express authority* confided to them by Christ; but it would not even follow from this change, that they did in reality make any alteration in the law of the Sabbath, either as it stood at the time of its original institution at the close of the creation, or in the Decalogue of Moses. The same portion of time which constituted the seventh day from the creation, could not be observed in all parts of the earth; and it is not probable, therefore, that the original law expresses more, than that a seventh day, or one day in seven, the seventh day after six days of labour, should be thus appropriated, from whatever point the enumeration might set out, or the hebdomadal cycle begin. For if more had been intended,

then it would have been necessary to establish a rule for the reckoning of days themselves, which has been different in different nations; some reckoning from evening to evening, as the Jews now do; others from midnight to midnight, &c. So that those persons in this country and in America, who hold their Sabbath on Saturday, under the notion of exactly conforming to the Old Testament, and yet calculate the days from midnight to midnight, have no assurance at all that they do not desecrate a part of the original Sabbath, which might begin, as the Jewish Sabbath now, on Friday evening; and, on the contrary, hallow a portion of a common day, by extending the Sabbath beyond Saturday evening. Even if this were ascertained, the differences of latitude and longitude would throw the whole into disorder; and it is not probable that a universal law should have been fettered with that circumstantial exactness, which would have rendered difficult, and sometimes doubtful, astronomical calculations necessary in order to its being obeyed according to the intention of the Lawgiver. Accordingly we find, says Mr. Holden, that

“In the original institution it is stated in general terms, that God blessed and sanctified the seventh day, which must undoubtedly imply the sanctity of every seventh day; but not that it is to be subsequently reckoned from the first demiurgic day. Had this been included in the command of the Almighty, something, it is probable, would have been added declaratory of the intention; whereas expressions the most undefined are employed; not a syllable is uttered concerning the order and number of the days; and it cannot reasonably be disputed that the command is truly obeyed by the separation of every seventh day, from common to sacred purposes, at whatever given time the cycle may commence. The difference in the mode of expression here from that which the sacred historian has used in the first chapter, is very remarkable. At the conclusion of each division of the work of creation, he says, ‘The evening and the morning were the first day,’ and so on; but at the termination of the whole, he merely calls it the seventh day; a diversity of phrase, which, as it would be inconsistent with every idea of inspiration to suppose it *undesigned*, must have been intended to denote *a day*, leaving it to each people as to what manner it is to be reckoned. The term obviously imports the period of the earth’s rotation round its axis, while it is left undetermined, whether it shall be counted from evening or morning, from noon or midnight. The terms of the law are, ‘Remember the Sabbath-day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work; but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God.—For in six

days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath-day, and hallowed it.' With respect to time, it is here mentioned in the same indefinite manner as at its primeval institution, nothing more being expressly required than to observe a day of sacred rest after every six days of labour. The seventh day is to be kept holy; but not a word is said as to what epoch the commencement of the series is to be referred; nor could the Hebrews have determined from the Decalogue what day of the week was to be kept as their Sabbath. The precept is not, Remember the seventh day of the week, to keep it holy, but 'Remember the Sabbath-day, to keep *it* holy;' and in the following explication of these expressions, it is not said that the seventh day of the week is the Sabbath, but without restriction, 'The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God;' not the seventh according to any particular method of computing the septenary cycle; but, in reference to the six before mentioned, every seventh day in rotation after six of labour." (1)

Thus that part of the Jewish law, the Decalogue, which, on the authority of the New Testament, we have shown to be obligatory upon Christians, leaves the computation of the hebdomadal cycle undetermined; and, after six days of labour, enjoins the seventh as the Sabbath, to which the Christian practice as exactly conforms as the Jewish. It is not, however, left to every individual to determine which day should be his Sabbath, though he should fulfil the law so far as to abstract the seventh part of his time from labour. It was ordained for worship, for *public* worship; and it is therefore necessary that the Sabbath should be uniformly observed by a whole community at the same time. The Divine Legislator of the Jews interposed for this end, by special direction, as to his people. The first Sabbath kept in the wilderness was calculated from the first day in which the manna fell; and with no apparent reference to the creation of the world. By Apostolic authority, it is now fixed to be held on the first day of the week; and thus one of the great ends for which it was established, that it should be a day of "holy convocation," is secured.

The above observations proceed upon the ground, that the Sabbath, according to the fair interpretation of the words of Moses, was instituted upon the creation of the world. But we have had Divines of considerable eminence in the English Church, who have attempted to disprove this. The reason of the zeal displayed by some of them on this question may be easily explained.

(1) HOLDEN *On the Sabbath.*



All the Churches of the Reformation did not indeed agree in their views of the Sabbath ; but the Reformers of England and Scotland generally adopted the strict and scriptural view ; and after them the Puritans. The opponents of the Puritans, in their controversies with them, and especially after the Restoration, associated a strict observance of the Sabbath with hypocrisy and disaffection ; and no small degree of ingenuity and learning was employed to prove, that, in the intervals of public worship, pleasure or business might be lawfully pursued ; and that this Christian festival stands on entirely different grounds from that of the Jewish Sabbath. The appointment of a Sabbath for man, at the close of the creation, was unfriendly to this notion ; and an effort therefore was made to explain away the testimony of Moses in the book of Genesis, by alleging that the Sabbath is there mentioned by *prolepsis* or anticipation. Of the arguments of this class of Divines, Paley availed himself in his "Moral Philosophy," and has become the most popular authority on this side of the question.

Paley's argument is well summed up, and satisfactorily answered, in the able work which has been above quoted.

"Among those who have held that the Pentateuchal record, above cited, is proleptical, and that the Sabbath is to be considered a part of the peculiar laws of the Jewish polity, no one has displayed more ability than Dr. Paley. Others on the same side have exhibited far more extensive learning, and have exercised much more patient research ; but for acuteness of intellect, for coolness of judgment, and a habit of perspicacious reasoning, he has been rarely, if ever, excelled. The arguments which he has approved, must be allowed to be the chief strength of the cause ; and, as he is at once the most judicious and most popular of its advocates, all that he has advanced demands a careful and candid examination. The doctrine which he maintains is, that the Sabbath was not instituted at the creation ; that it was designed for the Jews only ; that the *assembling* upon the first day of the week for the purpose of public worship, is a law of Christianity, of Divine appointment ; but that the *resting* on it longer than is necessary for attendance on these assemblies, is an ordinance of human institution ; binding, nevertheless, upon the conscience of every individual of a country in which a weekly Sabbath is established, for the sake of the beneficial purposes which the public and regular observance of it promotes, and recommended perhaps, in some degree, to the Divine approbation, by the resemblance it bears to what God was pleased to make a solemn part of the law which he delivered to the people of Israel, and by its subserviency to many

of the same uses. Such is the doctrine of this very able writer in his *Moral and Political Philosophy*; a doctrine which places the Sabbath on the footing of civil laws, recommended by their expediency, and which, being sanctioned by so high an authority, has probably given great encouragement to the lax notions concerning the Sabbath which unhappily prevail.

“Dr. Paley’s principal argument is, that the first institution of the Sabbath took place during the sojourning of the Jews in the wilderness. Upon the complaint of the people for want of food, God was pleased to provide for their relief by a miraculous supply of manna, which was found every morning upon the ground about the camp: ‘And they gathered it every morning, every man according to his eating; and when the sun waxed hot, it melted. And it came to pass, that on the sixth day they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for one man; and all the rulers of the congregation came and told Moses. And he said unto them, This is that which the Lord hath said, *To-morrow is the rest of the holy Sabbath unto the Lord*: Bake that which ye will bake to-day, and seethe that ye will seethe; and that which remaineth over lay up for you, to be kept until the morning. And they laid it up till the morning, as Moses bade; and it did not stink, (as it had done before, when some of them left it till the morning,) neither was there any worm therein. And Moses said, Eat that to-day; *for to-day is a Sabbath unto the Lord*; to-day ye shall not find it in the field. Six days ye shall gather it; but on the seventh day, which is the Sabbath, in it there shall be none. And it came to pass, that there went out some of the people on the seventh day for to gather, and they found none. And the Lord said unto Moses, How long refuse ye to keep my commandments, and my laws? See, *for that the Lord hath given you the Sabbath*, therefore he giveth you on the sixth day the bread of two days; abide ye every man in his place; let no man go out of his place on the seventh day. So the people rested on the seventh day.’

“From this passage, Dr. Paley infers that the Sabbath was first instituted in the wilderness; but to preclude the possibility of misrepresenting his argument, I will quote his own words: ‘Now, in my opinion, the transaction in the wilderness above recited, was the first actual institution of the Sabbath. For if the Sabbath had been instituted at the time of the creation, as the words in Genesis may seem at first sight to import; and if it had been observed all along from that time to the departure of the Jews out of Egypt, a period of about two thousand five hundred years; it appears unaccountable that no mention of it, no occasion of even the obscurest

allusion to it, should occur, either in the general history of the world before the call of Abraham, which contains, we admit, only a few memoirs of its early ages, and those extremely abridged ; or, which is more to be wondered at, in that of the lives of the first three Jewish patriarchs, which, in many parts of the account, is sufficiently circumstantial and domestic. Nor is there, in the passage above quoted from the sixteenth chapter of Exodus, any intimation that the Sabbath, when appointed to be observed, was only the revival of an ancient institution, which had been neglected, forgotten, or suspended ; nor is any such neglect imputed either to the inhabitants of the old world, or to any part of the family of Noah ; nor, lastly, is any permission recorded to dispense with the institution during the captivity of the Jews in Egypt, or on any other public emergency.'

"As to the first part of this reasoning, if it were granted that in the history of the patriarchal ages no mention is made of the Sabbath, nor even the obscurest allusion to it, it would be unfair to conclude that it was not appointed previous to the departure of the children of Israel from Egypt. If instituted at the creation, the memory of it might have been forgotten in the lapse of time, and the growing corruption of the world ; or, what is more probable, it might have been observed by the patriarchs, though no mention is made of it in the narrative of their lives, which, however circumstantial in some particulars, is, upon the whole, very brief and compendious. There are omissions in the sacred history much more extraordinary. Excepting Jacob's supplication at Bethel, scarcely a single allusion to prayer is to be found in all the Pentateuch ; yet, considering the eminent piety of the worthies recorded in it, we cannot doubt the frequency of their devotional exercises. Circumcision being the sign of God's covenant with Abraham, was beyond all question punctually observed by the Israelites, yet, from their settlement in Canaan, no particular instance is recorded of it till the circumcision of Christ, comprehending a period of about one thousand five hundred years. No express mention of the Sabbath occurs in the books of Joshua, Judges, Ruth, the first and second of Samuel, or the first of Kings, though it was, doubtless, regularly observed all the time included in these histories. In the second book of Kings, and the first and second of Chronicles, it is mentioned only twelve times, and some of them are merely repetitions of the same instance. If the Sabbath is so seldom spoken of in this long historical series, it can be nothing wonderful if it should not be mentioned in the summary account of the patriarchal ages.



"But though the Sabbath is not expressly mentioned in the history of the antediluvian and patriarchal ages, the observance of it seems to be intimated by the division of time into weeks. In relating the catastrophe of the flood, the historian informs us, that Noah, at the end of forty days, opened the window of the ark; 'and he stayed yet other seven days, and again he sent forth the dove out of the ark; and the dove came in to him in the evening, and, lo, in her mouth was an olive leaf, pluckt off. So Noah knew that the waters were abated from off the earth. And he stayed yet other seven days, and sent forth the dove, which returned not again unto him any more.' The term 'week' is used by Laban in reference to the nuptials of Leah, when he says, 'Fulfil her week, and we will give thee this also, for the service which thou shalt serve with me yet seven other years.' A week of days is here plainly signified, the same portion of time which, in succeeding ages, was set apart for nuptial festivities, as appears from the book of Esther, where the marriage feast of Vashti lasted seven days, and more particularly from the account of Samson's marriage feast. Joseph and his brethren mourned for their father Jacob seven days.

"That the computation of time by weeks obtained from the most remote antiquity, appears from the traditionary and written records of all nations, the numerous and undeniable testimonies of which have been so often collected and displayed, that it would be worse than useless to repeat them.

"Combining all these testimonies together, they fully establish the primitive custom of measuring time by the division of weeks; and prevailing as it did among nations separated by distance, having no mutual intercourse, and wholly distinct in manners, it must have originated from one common source, which cannot reasonably be supposed any other than the memory of the creation preserved in the Noahic family, and handed down to their posterities. The computation by days, months, and years, arises from obvious causes, the revolution of the moon, and the annual and diurnal revolutions of the sun; but the division of time by periods of seven days, has no foundation in any natural or visible septenary change; it must, therefore, have originated from some positive appointment, or some tradition anterior to the dispersion of mankind, which cannot well be any other than the memory of the creation and primeval blessing of the seventh day.

"Dr. Paley's next argument is, that 'there is not in the sixteenth chapter of Exodus any intimation that the Sabbath, when appointed to be observed, was only the revival of an ancient

institution which had been neglected, forgotten, or suspended.' The contrary, however, seems the more natural inference from the narrative. It is mentioned exactly in the way an historian would, who had occasion to speak of a well-known institution. For instance, when the people were astonished at the double supply of manna on the sixth day, Moses observes, 'This is that which the Lord hath said, To-morrow is the rest of the holy Sabbath unto the Lord;' which, as far as we know, was never said previously to this transaction, but at the close of the creation. This, surely, is the language of a man referring to a matter with which the people were already acquainted, and recalling it to their remembrance. In the fifth verse, God promises on the sixth day twice as much as they gather daily. For this no reason is given, which seems to imply that it was already known to the children of Israel. Such a promise, without some cause being assigned for so extraordinary a circumstance, would have been strange indeed; and if the reason had been, that the seventh day was now for the first time to be appointed a festival, in which no work was to be done, would not the author have stated this circumstance? Again, it is said, 'Six days ye shall gather it; but on the seventh day, which is the Sabbath, in it there shall be none;' and 'for that the Lord hath given you the Sabbath, therefore he giveth you on the sixth day the bread of two days.' Here the Sabbath is spoken of as an ordinance with which the people were familiar. A double quantity of manna was given on the sixth day, *because* the following day, as they well knew, was the Sabbath, in which God rested from his work, and which was to be kept as a day of rest, and holy to the Lord. It is likewise mentioned incidentally, as it were, in the recital of the miraculous supply of manna, without any notice of its being enjoined upon that occasion for the first time; which would be a very surprising circumstance, had it been the original establishment of the Sabbath. In short, the entire phraseology in the account of this remarkable transaction accords with the supposition, and with it alone, that the Sabbath had been long established, and was well known to the Israelites.

"That no neglect of the Sabbath is 'imputed either to the inhabitants of the old world, or to any of the family of Noah,' is very true; but, so far from there being any proof of such negligence, there is, on the contrary, as we have seen, much reason for believing that it was duly observed by the pious Sethites of the old world, and after the deluge, by the virtuous line of Shem. True, likewise, it is, that there is not 'any permission recorded to dispense with the institution during the captivity of the Jews in Egypt,

or on any other public emergency.' But where is the evidence that such a permission would be consistent with the Divine wisdom? And if not, none such would either be given or recorded. At any rate, it is difficult to see how the silence of Scripture, concerning such a circumstance, can furnish an argument in vindication of the opinion, that the Sabbath was first appointed in the wilderness. To allege it for this purpose, is just as inconclusive as it would be to argue that the Sabbath was instituted subsequent to the return of the Jews from Babylonia, because neither the observance of it, nor any permission to dispense with it, during the captivity, is recorded in Scripture.

"The passage in the second chapter of Genesis is next adduced by Dr. Paley, and he pronounces it not inconsistent with his opinion; 'for as the seventh day was erected into a Sabbath on account of God's resting upon that day from the work of creation, it was natural enough in the historian, when he had related the history of the creation, and of God's ceasing from it on the seventh day, to add, 'and God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it, because that on it he had rested from all his work which God had created and made;' although the blessing and sanctification, that is, the religious distinction and appropriation of that day, were not actually made till many ages afterwards. The words do not assert, that God *then* 'blessed' and 'sanctified' the seventh day, but that he blessed and sanctified it *for that reason*; and if any ask, why the Sabbath, or sanctification of the seventh day, was *then* mentioned, if it were not *then* appointed, the answer is at hand, the order of connexion, and not of time, introduced the mention of the Sabbath in the history of the subject which it was ordained to commemorate.'

"That the Hebrew historian, in the passage here referred to, uses a prolepsis or anticipation, and alludes to the Mosaical institution of the Sabbath, is maintained by some of the ancient Fathers, by Wachner, Heidegger, Beausobre, by Le Clerc, Rosenmuller, Geddes, Dawson, and other commentators, and by the general stream of those writers who regard the Sabbath as peculiar to the Jews. Yet this opinion is built upon the assumption, that the book of Genesis was not written till after the giving of the law, which *may* be the fact, but of which most unquestionably there is no proof. But waiving this consideration, it is scarcely possible to conceive a greater violence to the sacred text, than is offered by this interpretation. It attributes to the inspired author the absurd assertion, that God rested on the seventh day from all his works which he had made, and THEREFORE about two thousand five hun-



dred years after, God blessed and sanctified the seventh day. It may be as well imagined that God had finished his work on the seventh day, but rested on some other seventh day, as that he rested the day following the work of creation, and afterwards blessed and sanctified another. Not the slightest evidence appears for believing that Moses followed 'the order of connexion, and not of time,' for no reasonable motive can be assigned for *then* introducing the mention of it, if it was not *then* appointed. The design of the sacred historian clearly is, to give a faithful account of the origin of the world, and both the *resting* on the seventh day, and the *blessing* it, have too close a connexion to be separated: If the one took place immediately after the work of creation was concluded, so did the other. To the account of the production of the universe, the whole narrative is confined; there is no intimation of subsequent events, nor the most distant allusion to Jewish ceremonies; and it would be most astonishing if the writer deserted his grand object to mention one of the Hebrew ordinances which was not appointed till ages afterwards.

"But according to Dr. Geddes, the opinion of a prolepsis derives some confirmation from the original Hebrew, which he renders, 'On the sixth day God completed all the work which he had to do; and on the SEVENTH day, ceased from doing any of his works. God, therefore, blessed the seventh day, and made it holy, because on it he ceased from all his works, which he had ordained to do.' This version, he says, is 'in the supposition that the writer refers to the Jewish Sabbath:?' of course it was designedly adapted to an hypothesis; but, notwithstanding this suspicious circumstance, it is not easy to determine how it differs in sense from the received translation, as it leaves the question entirely undecided *when* this blessing and sanctification took place. The proposed version, however, is opposed by those in the Polyglott, and by the generality of translators, who render the particle *vau* at the beginning of the third verse, as a copulative, not as an illative; and it is surprising how a sound Hebrew scholar can translate it otherwise. In short, nothing can be more violent and unnatural than the proleptical interpretation; and if we add, that it rests upon the unproved assumption, that the record in question was written *after* the delivery of the law, it must appear so devoid of critical support, as not to require a moment's hesitation in rejecting it." (2)

So satisfactorily does it appear that the institution of the Sabbath is historically narrated in Genesis; and it follows from thence, that

the law of the Sabbath is universal, and not peculiar to the Jews. God blessed and sanctified it, not certainly for himself, but for his creatures ; that it might be a day of special *blessing* to them, and be *set apart*, not only from unholy acts, for they are forbidden on every day ; but from *common* uses. It was thus stamped with a hallowed character from the commencement, and in works of a hallowed character ought it therefore to be employed.

The obligation of a Sabbatical observance upon Christians being thus established, the inquiry which naturally follows, is, In what manner is this great festival, at once so ancient and so venerable, and intended to commemorate events so illustrious and so important to mankind, to be celebrated ? Many have spoken of the difficulty of settling rules of this kind ; but this will ordinarily vanish, if we consent to be guided fully by the principles of Scripture.

We allow that it requires judgment, and prudence, and charity, and, above all, a mind *well disposed* to the spiritual employment of the Sabbath, to make a right application of the law. But this is the case with other precepts also ; such, for instance, as the loving our neighbour as ourselves : with respect to which we seldom hear any complaint of difficulty in the application. But, even if some want of special direction should be felt, this can only affect minor details ; and probably the matter has been so left by the Lawgiver, to “try us, and prove us, and to know what is in our heart.” Something may have been reserved, in this case, for the exercise of spontaneous obedience ; for that generous construction of the precept which will be dictated by devotion and gratitude ; and for the operation of a feeling of indignant shame, that the only day which God has reserved for himself, should be grudged to him, and trenched upon by every petty excuse of convenience, interest, or sloth, and pared down, and negotiated for, in the spirit of one who seeks to overreach another. Of this we may be assured, that he who is most anxious to find exceptions to the general rule, will, in most cases, be a defaulter upon even his own estimate of the general duty.

The only real difficulties with which men have entangled themselves, have arisen from the want of clear and decided views of the law of the Sabbath as it is a matter of express revelation. There are two extremes, either of which must be fertile of perplexity. The first is, to regard the Sabbath as a prudential institution, adopted by the primitive Church, and resting upon civil and ecclesiastical authority ; a notion which has been above refuted. For if this theory be adopted, it is impossible to find satisfactory

rules, either in the Old or New Testament, applicable to the subject; and we may therefore cease to wonder at that variety of opinions, and those vacillations between duty and license, which have been found in different Churches, and among their theological writers. The difficulty of establishing any rule at all, to which conscience is strictly amenable, is then evident, and indeed entirely insuperable; and men in vain attempt to make a partial Sabbath by their own authority, when they reject "the day which the Lord hath made." If, on the other hand, a proper distinction is not preserved between the moral law of the Jews, which re-enacts the still more ancient institution of the Sabbath, (a law we have seen to be obligatory upon all Christians, to the end of time,) and the political and ceremonial law of that people, which contains particular rules as to the observance of the Sabbath; fixing both the day on which it was to be held, viz. the seventh of the week, and issuing certain prohibitions not applicable to all people; which branch of the Mosaic Law was brought to an end by Christ,—difficulties will arise from this quarter. One difficulty will respect the day; another the hour of the diurnal circle from which the Sabbath must commence. Other difficulties will arise from the inconvenience or impossibility of accommodating the Judaical precepts to countries and manners totally dissimilar; and others, from the degree of civil delinquency and punitiveness with which violations of the Sabbath ought to be marked in a Christian state. The kindling of fires, for instance, in their dwellings was forbidden to the Jews; but for extending this to harsher climates, there is no authority. This rule would make the Sabbath a day of bodily suffering, and, in some cases, of danger to health, which is inconsistent with that merciful and festival character which the Sabbath was designed every where to bear. The same observation may apply to the cooking of victuals, which was also prohibited to the Jews by express command. To the gathering of sticks on the Sabbath the penalty of death was assigned, on one occasion, for reasons probably arising out of the Theocratical government of the Jews; but surely this is no precedent for making the violation of the Sabbath a capital crime in the code of a Christian country.

Between the Decalogue, and the political and ceremonial laws which followed, there is a marked distinction. They were given at two different times, and in a different manner; and, above all, the former is referred to in the New Testament, as of perpetual obligation; the other as peculiar, and as abolished by Christ. It does not follow, however, from this, that those precepts in the Levitical code, which relate to the Sabbath, are of no use to us. They show



us how the general law was carried into its detail of application by the great Legislator, who condescended to be at once a civil and an ecclesiastical Governor of a chosen people; and though they are not in all respects binding upon us, in their full form, they all embody general interpretations of the fourth command of the Decalogue, to which, as far as they are applicable to a people otherwise circumstanced, respect is reverently and devoutly to be had. The prohibition to buy and sell on the Sabbath is as applicable to us as to the Jews; so is that against travelling on the Sabbath, except for purposes of religion, which was allowed to them also. If we may lawfully kindle fires in our dwellings, yet we may learn from the law peculiar to the Jews, to keep domestic services under restraint; if we may cook victuals for necessity and comfort, we are to be restrained from feasting; if violations of the Sabbath are not to be made capital crimes by Christian governors, the enforcement of a decent external observance of the rest of the Sabbath is a lawful use of power, and a part of the duty of a Christian magistrate.

But the rules by which the observance of the Sabbath is clearly explained, will be found in abundant copiousness and evidence in the original command; in the Decalogue; in incidental passages of Scripture, which refer not so much to the political law of the Jews, as to the universal moral code; and in the discourses and acts of Christ, and his Apostles: so that, independent of the Levitical code, we have abundant guidance. It is a day of *rest* from worldly pursuits; a day *sanctified*, that is, set apart for holy uses, which are the proper and the only lawful occupations of the day; it is a day of *public worship*, or, as it is expressed in the Mosaic law, “of holy convocation,” or assembly;—a day for *the exercise of mercy* to man and beast;—a day for the *devout commemoration*, by religious acts and meditations, of the creation and redemption of the world; and, consequently, for the cultivation of that *spirit* which is suitable to such exercises, by laying aside all worldly *cares* and *pleasures*; to which holy exercises there is to be a full appropriation of the *seventh part of our time*; necessary sleep, and engagements of real necessity, as explained by our Saviour, only being excluded.

Works of charity and mercy were not excluded by the rigour of the Mosaic Law, much less by the Christian dispensation. The rule of doing good on the Sabbath day has, however, sometimes been interpreted with too much laxity, without considering that such acts form no part of the *reason* for which that day was sanctified, and that they are therefore to be grounded upon the necessity of *immediate* exertion. The secularity connected with

certain public Charities has often been pushed beyond this rule of necessity, and as such has become unlawful.

The reason generally given for this, is, that men cannot be found to give time on the week day to the management of such Charities : and they will never be found, whilst the rule is brought down to convenience. Men's principles are to be raised, and not the command lowered. And when Ministers perseveringly do their duty, and but a few conscientious persons support them, the whole will be found practicable and easy. Charities are pressed either upon our feelings or our interests, and sometimes on both ; and when they become really urgent, time will be found for their management, without "robbing God," and laying down that most debasing of all principles, that our sacrifices are to cost us nothing. The teaching of writing in Sunday schools has been pleaded for on the same assumed ground of necessity ; but in all well and religiously conducted institutions of this kind, it has been found quite practicable to accomplish the object in a lawful manner ; and even if it had not, there was no obligation binding as to that practice, equal to that which binds us to obey the law of God. It is a work which comes not under any of our Lord's exceptions : it may be a benevolent thing ; but it has in it no character of *mercy*, either to the bodies or to the souls of men.

As to amusements and recreations, which, when "*innocent*," that is, we suppose, not "*immoral*," are sometimes pleaded for by persons who advocate the serious observance of the Lord's day, but a few words are necessary. If to public worship we are to add a more than ordinary attention to the duties of the family and the closet, which all such persons allow, then there is little time for recreation and amusement ; and if there were, the heart which is truly impressed with duties so sacred, and has entered into their spirit, can have no relish for them. Against every temptation of this kind, the words of the pious Archbishop Dawes may serve as a salutary admonition :—

"Dost thou require of me, O Lord, but one day in seven for thy more especial service, when as all my times, all my days, are thy due tribute, and shall I grudge thee that one day ? Have I but one day in the week, a peculiar season of nurturing and training up my soul for heavenly happiness, and shall I think the whole of this too much, and judge my duties at an end, when the public offices of the Church are only ended ? Ah ! where, in such a case, is my zeal, my sincerity, my constancy, and perseverance of holy obedience ? Where my love unto, my delight and relish in, pious performances ? Would those that are thus but half Christians be

content to be half saved? Would those who are thus not far from the kingdom of heaven, be willing to be utterly excluded thence for arriving no nearer to a due observance of the Lord's day? Am I so afraid of sabbatizing with the Jews, that I carelessly omit keeping the day as a good Christian? Where can be the harm of over-doing in God's worship, suppose I could overdo? But when my Saviour has told me, after I have done all, I am still an unprofitable servant, where is the hazard, where the possibility, of doing too much; whereas in doing too little, in falling short of performing a due obedience on the Sabbath, I may also fall short of eternal life?"

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## CHAPTER IV.

### MORALS ;—DUTIES TO OUR NEIGHBOUR.

WHEN our duty to others is summed up in the general epitome of the second table, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself;" although love must be so taken as to include many other principles and acts, yet we are thereby taught the source from which they truly spring, when performed evangelically, and also that UNIVERSAL CHARITY is to be the habitual and reigning affection of the heart, in all our relations to our fellow creatures.

This affection is to be considered in its SOURCE.

That source is a regenerated state of mind. We have shown that the love of God springs from the gift of the Holy Ghost to those who are justified by faith in Christ, and that every sentiment which, in any other circumstances, assumes this designation, is imperfect or simulated. We make the same remark as to the love of our neighbour. It is an imperfect or simulated sentiment, if it flow not from the love of God, the sure mark of a regenerate nature. We here also see the superior character of *Christian* morals, and of morals when kept in connexion, as they ought always to be, with the doctrines of the Gospel, and their operation in the heart. There may, indeed, be a degree of natural benevolence; the indirect influence of a benevolent nature may counteract the selfish and the malevolent feelings; and education, when well directed, will come in to the aid of nature. Yet the principle, as a religious one, and in its full operation, can only result from a supernatural change of our nature, because that only can subdue



those affections which counteract benevolence and charity in their efficient and habitual manifestations.

This affection is also to be considered in respect of what it EXCLUDES.

It excludes all *anger* beyond that degree of resentment which a culpable action in another may call forth, in order to mark the sense we entertain of its evil, and to impress that evil upon the offender, so that we may lead him to repent of it, and forsake it. This seems the proper rule by which to distinguish lawful anger from that which is contrary to charity, and therefore malevolent and sinful. It excludes *implacability*; for if we do not promptly and generously forgive others their trespasses, this is deemed to be so great a violation of that law of love which ought to bind men together, that our heavenly Father will not forgive us. It excludes all *revenge*; so that we are to exact no punishment of another for offences against ourselves: and though it be lawful to call in the penalties of the laws for crimes against society, yet this is never to be done on the principle of private revenge; but on the public ground, that law and government are ordained of God, which produces a case that comes under the inspired rule, "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord." It excludes all *prejudice*; by which is meant a harsh construction of men's motives and characters upon surmise, or partial knowledge of the facts, accompanied with an inclination to form an ill opinion of them in the absence of proper evidence. This appears to be what the Apostle Paul means, when he says, "Charity thinketh no evil." It excludes all *censoriousness* or *evil speaking*, when the end is not the correction of the offender, or when a declaration of the truth as to one person is not required by our love and duty to another; for whenever the end is merely to lower a person in the estimation of others, it is resolvable solely into a splenetic and immoral feeling. It excludes all those *aggressions*, whether petty or more weighty, which may be made upon the interests of another, when the law of the case, or even the abstract right, might not be against our claim. These are always complex cases, and can but occasionally occur; but the rule which binds us to do unto others as we would they should do unto us, binds us to act upon the benevolent view of the case; and to forego the rigidity of right. Finally, it excludes, as limitations to its exercise, all those *artificial distinctions* which have been created by men, or by providential arrangements, or by accidental circumstances. Men of all nations, of all colours, of all conditions, are the objects of the unlimited precept, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Kind feelings produced by natural instincts,

by intercourse, by country, may call the love of our neighbour into warmer exercise as to individuals or classes of men, or these may be considered as distinct and special, though similar affections superadded to this universal charity; but as to all men, this charity is an efficient affection, excluding all ill will, and all injury.

But its ACTIVE EXPRESSION remains to be considered.

It is not a merely negative affection; but it brings forth rich and varied fruit. It produces a feeling of *delight* in the happiness of others, and thus destroys envy; it is the source of *sympathy* and *compassion*; it opens the hand in *liberality* for the supply of the wants of others; it gives *cheerfulness* to every service undertaken in the cause of others; it resists the wrong which may be inflicted upon them; and it will run hazards of health and life for their sakes. It has special respect to the *spiritual interests and salvation* of men; and thus it instructs, persuades, reproves the ignorant and vicious; counsels the simple; comforts the doubting and perplexed; and rejoices in those gifts and graces of others, by which society may be enlightened and purified. The zeal of Apostles, the patience of Martyrs, the travels and labours of Evangelists in the first ages, were all animated by this affection; and the earnestness of Preachers in all ages, and the more private labours of Christians for the benefit of the souls of men, with the operations of those voluntary associations which send forth Missionaries to the Heathen, or distribute Bibles and Tracts, or conduct Schools, are all its visible expressions before the world. A principle of philanthropy may be conceived to exist independent of the influence of active and efficient Christianity; but it has always expended itself either in good wishes, or, at most, in feeble efforts, chiefly directed to the mitigation of a little temporary external evil. Except in connexion with religion, and that the religion of the heart, wrought and maintained there, by the acknowledged influences of the Holy Spirit, the love of mankind has never exhibited itself under such views and acts as those we have just referred to. It has never been found in characters *naturally* selfish and obdurate; has never disposed men to make great and painful sacrifices for others; never sympathized with spiritual wretchedness; never been called forth into its highest exercises by considerations drawn from the immortal relations of man to eternity; never originated large plans for the illumination and moral culture of society; never fixed upon the grand object to which it is now bending the hearts, the interests, and hopes of the universal Church, the conversion of the world. Philanthropy, in systems of mere ethics, like their love of God, is a greatly *inferior* principle to that which is enjoined by Christianity, and infused by

its influence ;—another proof of the folly of separating morals from revealed truth, and of the necessity of cultivating them upon evangelical principles.

The same conclusion will be established, if we consider those WORKS OF MERCY which the principle of universal philanthropy will dictate, and which form a large portion of our “duty to our neighbour.” It is more the design of this part of the present work, to exhibit the peculiar nature and perfection of the morals of Christianity, than to consider moral duties in detail ; and, therefore, it is only necessary to assume what is obvious to all, that the exercise of practical mercy to the needy and miserable, is a moral duty clearly revealed, including also the application of a part of our property to benefit mankind in other respects, as we have opportunity. But let us ask, under what rules can the *quantum* of our exertions in doing good to others be determined, except by the authority of revealed religion ? It is clear that there is an antagonist principle of selfishness in man, which counteracts our charities ; and that the demands of personal gratification, and of family interests, and of show and expense in our modes of living, are apt to take up so large a share of what remains after our necessities, and the lawful demands of station, and a prudent provision for old age and for our families after our decease, are met, that a very small portion is wont to be considered as lawfully disposable, under all these considerations, for purposes of general beneficence. If we have no rules or principles, it is clear that the most limited efforts may pass for very meritorious acts ; or that they will be left to be measured only by the different degrees of natural compassion in man, or by some immoral principle, such as the love of human praise. There is nothing in any mere system of morals to direct in such cases ; certainly nothing to compel either the principles or the heart. Here then we shall see also in how different a predicament this interesting branch of morality stands, when kept in close and inseparable connexion with Christianity. It is true, that we have no specific rule as to the quantum of our givings in the Scriptures ; and the reason of this is not inapparent. Such a rule must have been branched out into an inconvenient number of detailed directions to meet every particular case ; it must have respected the different and changing states of society and civilization ; it must have controlled men’s savings as well as givings, because the latter are dependent upon them ; it must have prescribed modes of dress, and modes of living : all which would have left cases still partially touched or wholly unprovided for, and the multiplicity of rules might have been a trap to our consciences,



rather than the means of directing them. There is also a more general reason for this omission. The exercise of mercy is a work of the affections ; it must have, therefore, something free and spontaneous in it ; and it was designed to be voluntary, that the moral effect produced upon society might be to bind men together in a softer bond, and to call forth reciprocally good affections. To this the stern character of particular laws would have been inimical. Christianity teaches mercy, by general principles, which at once sufficiently direct and leave to the heart the free play of its affections.

The general LAW is express and unequivocal : "As ye have opportunity do good unto all men, and especially to them that are of the household of faith." "To do good and to communicate forget not, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." A most important and influential principle, to be found in no mere system of ethics, is also contained in the revelation of a particular relation in which we all stand to God, and on which we must be judged at the last day. We are "stewards," "servants," to whom the great Master has committed his "goods," to be used according to his directions. We have nothing, therefore, of our own, no right in property, except under the conditions on which it is committed to us ; and we must give an account for our use of it, according to the rule. A rule of proportion is also in various passages of Scripture expressly laid down : "Where little is given, little is required ; where much is given, much is required." "For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to what a man hath, and not according to what he hath not." It is a further rule, that our charities should be both cheerful and abundant. "See that ye *abound* in this grace also," "not grudgingly, or of necessity, for God loveth a cheerful giver." These general rules and principles being laid down, the appeal is made to the heart, and men are left to the influence of the spiritual and grateful affections excited there. All the venerable examples of Scripture are brought to bear upon the free and liberal exercises of beneficence, crowned with the example of our Saviour : "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might become rich." An appeal is made to man's gratitude for the blessings of Providence to himself, and he is enjoined to give "as the Lord hath prospered him." Our fellow creatures are constantly presented to us under tender relations, as our "brethren ;" or, more particularly, as "of the household of faith." Special promises are made of God's favour and blessing, as the reward of such acts in the present life : "And God

is able to make all grace abound toward you, that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work ;” and finally, although every notion of merit is excluded, yet the rewards of eternity are represented as to be graciously dispensed, so as specially to distinguish and honour every “work of faith,” and “labour of love.” Under so powerful an *authority*, so explicit a general *directory*, and so effectual an *excitement*, is this branch of morality placed by the Gospel.

As our religion enjoins charity, so also it prescribes **JUSTICE**. As a mutual dependence has been established among men, so also there are mutual *rights*, in the rendering of which to each other, justice, when considered as a social virtue, consists.

Various definitions and descriptions of justice are found among moralists and jurists, of different degrees of importance and utility to those who write, and to those who study, formal treatises on its collective or separate branches. The distribution of justice into *Ethical*, *Economical*, and *Political*, is more suited to our purpose, and is sufficiently comprehensive. The First considers all mankind as on a level ; the Second regards them as associated into families, under the several relations of husband and wife, parents and children, masters and servants ; and the Third comprehends them as united into public states, and obliged to certain duties, either as magistrates or people. On all these the rules of conduct in Scripture are explicit and forcible.

**ETHICAL JUSTICE**, as it considers mankind as on a level, chiefly therefore respects what are usually called men’s *natural rights*, which are briefly summed up in three,—*life*, *property*, and *liberty*.

The natural right to *Life* is guarded by the precept, “Thou shalt not kill ;” and it is also limited by the more ancient injunction to the sons of Noah, “Whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed.” In a state of society, indeed, this right may be further limited by a government, and capital punishments be extended to other crimes, (as we see in the Mosaic law,) provided the law be equally binding on all offenders, and rest upon the necessity of the case, as determined by the good of the whole community ; and also that in every country professing Christianity, the merciful as well as the righteous character of that religion be suffered to impress itself upon its legislation. But against all individual authority the life of man is absolutely secured ; and not only so, but anger, which is the first principle of violence, and which proceeds first to malignity and revenge, and then to personal injuries, is prohibited, under the penalty of the Divine wrath ; a lofty proof of the superior character of the Christian rule of justice.

In *Property*, lawfully acquired, that is, acquired without injury to others, every man has also a natural right. This right also may be restrained in society, without injustice, seeing it is but the price which every man pays for protection, and other advantages of the social state; but here also the necessity of the case, resting upon the benefit of the community, is to be the rule of this modification of the natural claim. The law too must lie equally upon all, *cæteris paribus*; and every individual whose right of property is thus interfered with must have his due share of the common advantage. Against individual aggression the right of property is secured by the Divine law, "Thou shalt not steal;" and by another law which carries the restraint up to the very principle of justice in the heart, "Thou shalt not covet;" covetousness being that corrupt affection from which injuries done to others in their property arise. The Christian injunction, to be "*content* with such things as we have," is another important security. The rule which binds rulers and governments in their interferences with this natural right of property, comes under the head of political justice.

*Liberty* is another natural right, which by individual authority, at least, cannot be interfered with. Hence "man stealing," the object of which is to reduce another to slavery, by obtaining forcible possession of his person, and compelling his labour, is ranked with crimes of the greatest magnitude in the New Testament; and against it the special vengeance of God is threatened. By the Jewish law also, it was punished with death. How far the natural right which every man has to his own liberty may, like the natural right to property, be restrained by public authority, is a point on which different opinions have been held. Prisoners of war were formerly considered to be absolute *captives*, the right of which claim is involved in the question of the right of war. Where one can be justified, so may the other; since a surrender of the person in war is the commutation of liberty for life.\* In the more humane practice of modern warfare, an exchange of prisoners is effected; but even this supposes an acquired right on each side in the prisoners, and a commutation by an exchange. Should the progeny of such prisoners of war, doomed, as by ancient custom,

\* Montesquieu says, "it is false that killing in war is lawful, unless in a case of absolute necessity: but when a man has made another his slave, he cannot be said to have been under a necessity of taking away his life, since he actually did not take it away. War gives no other right over prisoners than to disable them from doing any farther harm, by securing their persons."—And "if a prisoner of war is not to be reduced to slavery, much less are his children." This reason, therefore, with others, assigned by the civilians in justification of slavery, he concludes is "false." *Spirit of Laws*, Book xv, ch. ii.—AMERICAN EDITORS.



to perpetual servitude, be also kept in slavery, and the purchase of slaves also be practised, the question which then arises is one which tries the whole case of slavery, as far as public law is concerned. Among the patriarchs there was a mild species of domestic servitude, distinct from that of captives of war. Among the Jews, a Hebrew might be sold for debt, or sell himself when poor, but only till the year of release. After that, his continuation in a state of slavery was perfectly voluntary. The Jews might, however, hold foreigners as slaves for life. Michaelis has well observed, that, by the restrictions of his law, Moses remarkably mitigated the rigours of slavery. "This is, as it were, the spirit of his laws respecting it. He appears to have regarded it as a hardship, and to have disapproved of its severities. Hence we find him, in Deut. xxiii, 15, 16, ordaining that no foreign servant, who sought for refuge among the Israelites, should be delivered up to his master." (3) This view of the case, we may add, will probably afford the reason why slavery was at all allowed under the Jewish dispensation. The general state of society in the surrounding nations might perhaps render it a necessary evil; but in other countries it existed in forms harsh and oppressive, whilst the merciful nature of the Mosaic Institute impressed upon it a mild and mitigated character, in recognition of man's natural rights, and as an example to other countries. And to show how great a contrast with our modern colonial slavery, the case of slaves among the Jews presented, we may remark, that all foreign slaves were circumcised, and therefore initiated into the true religion; that they had the full and strict advantage of the Sabbath confirmed to them by express statute; that they had access to the solemn religious festivals of the Jews, and partook of the feasts made upon the offerings; that they could possess property, as appears from Lev. xxv, 49, and 2 Sam. ix, 10; and that all the fruits which grew spontaneously during the Sabbatical year were given to them, and to the indigent. Michaelis has also showed, that not only was the ox not muzzled when treading out the corn, but that the slaves and day labourers might eat without restraint of the fruits they were gathering in their master's service, and drink of the wine they pressed from the wine press. (4) The Jewish law may therefore be considered not so much as controlling the natural right which man has to liberty, and so authorizing the infraction of that right under certain circumstances, but as coming in to regulate and to soften a state of things already existing, and grown

(3) *Commentaries on the Laws of Moses.*

(4) *Ibid.* Art. 130.

into general practice. All, therefore, that can be fairly inferred from the existence of slavery under that law, is, that a legislature, in certain cases, may be justified in mitigating, rather than abolishing, that evil. But even here, since the Legislator was in fact God, whose right to dispose of his creatures cannot be questioned, and since also the nations neighbouring to the Jews were under a malediction because of their idolatries, the Jewish law can be no *rule* to a Christian state; and all arguments drawn from it in favour of perpetual slavery, suppose that a mere earthly legislature is invested with the powers and prerogatives of the Divine Legislator of the Jews, which of course vitiates the whole reasoning.

As to the existence of slavery in Christian states, every government, as soon as it professes to be Christian, binds itself to be regulated by the principles of the New Testament; and though a part of its subjects should at that time be in a state of servitude, and their sudden emancipation might be obviously an injury to society at large, it is bound to show that its spirit and tendency is as inimical to slavery as is the Christianity which it professes. All the injustice and oppression against which it can guard that condition, and all the mitigating regulations it can adopt, are obligatory upon it; and since also every Christian slave is enjoined by Apostolic authority to choose freedom, when it is possible to attain it, as being a better state, and more befitting a Christian man, so is every Christian master bound, by the principle of loving his neighbour, and more especially his "brother in Christ," as himself, to promote his passing into that better and more Christian state. To the instruction of the slaves in religion would every such Christian government also be bound, and still farther to adopt measures for the final extinction of slavery; the rule of its proceeding in this case being the accomplishment of this object as soon as is compatible with the real welfare of the enslaved portion of its subjects themselves, and not the consideration of the losses which might be sustained by their proprietors, which, however, ought to be compensated by other means, as far as they are just, and equitably estimated.

If this be the mode of proceeding clearly pointed out by Christianity to a State on its first becoming Christian, when previously, and for ages, the practice of slavery had grown up with it; how much more forcibly does it impose its obligation upon nations involved in the guilt of the modern African slavery! They professed Christianity when they commenced the practice. They entered upon a traffic which *ab initio* was, upon their own principles, unjust and cruel. They had no rights of war to plead against

the natural rights of the first captives ; who were in fact stolen, or purchased from the stealers, knowing them to be so. The governments themselves never acquired any right of property in the parents ; they have none in their descendants, and can acquire none ; as the thief who steals cattle cannot, should he feed and defend them, acquire any right of property, either in them or the stock they may produce, although he should be at the charge of rearing them. These governments not having a right of property in their colonial slaves, could not transfer any right of property in them to their present masters, for it could not give what it never had ; nor, by its connivance at the robberies and purchases of stolen human beings alter the essential injustice of the transaction. All such governments are therefore clearly bound, as they fear God and dread his displeasure, to restore all their slaves to the condition of free men. Restoration to their friends and country is now out of the question ; they are bound to protect them where they are, and have the right to exact their obedience to good laws in return ; but property in them they cannot obtain, their natural right to liberty is untouched and inviolable. The manner in which this right is to be restored, we grant, is in the power of such governments to determine, provided that proceeding be regulated by the principles above laid down,—First, that the emancipation be sincerely determined upon, at some time future : Secondly, that it be not delayed beyond the period which the *general interest of the slaves themselves* prescribes, and which is to be judged of benevolently, and without any bias of judgment, giving the advantage of every doubt to the injured party : Thirdly, that all possible means be adopted to render freedom a good to them. It is only under such circumstances that the continuance of slavery among us can cease to be a national sin, calling down, as it has done, and must do until a process of emancipation be honestly commenced, the just displeasure of God. What compensations may be justly claimed from the governments, that is, the public of those countries who have entangled themselves in this species of unjust dealing, by those who have purchased men and women whom no one had the right to sell, and no one had the right to buy, is a perfectly distinct question, and ought not to turn repentance and justice out of their course, or delay their operations for a moment. Perhaps, such is the unfruitful nature of all wrong, that it may be found, that, as free labourers, the slaves would be of equal or more value to those who employ them, than at present. If otherwise, as in some degree “all have sinned,” the real loss ought to be borne by all, when that loss is fairly and impartially ascertained ; but of which loss, the slave interest, if we



may so call it, ought in justice to bear more than an equal share, as having had the greatest gain.\*

The rules of Christian justice thus secure the three great natural rights of man ; but it may be inquired whether he has himself the power of surrendering them at his own option ?

And First, with respect to LIFE.

Since government is an institution of God, it seems obligatory upon all men to live in a social state ; and, if so, to each is conceded the right of putting his life to hazard, when called upon by his government to defend that state from domestic rebellion or foreign war. So also we have the power to *hazard* our lives to save a fellow creature from perishing. In times of persecution for religion, we are enjoined by our Lord to flee from one city to another ; but when flight is cut off, we have the power to surrender life rather than betray our allegiance to Christ. According to the Apostle's rule, "we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren ;" that is, for the Church and the cause of religion. In this case, and in some others, accompanied with danger to life, when a plain rule of duty is seen to be binding upon us, we are not only at liberty to take the risk, but are bound to do it ; since it is more our duty to obey God than to take care of our health and life. These instances of devotion have been by some writers called "suicides of duty," a phrase which may well be dispensed with, although the sentiment implied in it is correct.

On suicide, properly so called, that is, self murder, our modern moralists have added little to what is advanced by the ethical writers of Greece and Rome, to prove its unlawfulness ; for, though suicide was much practised in those ancient states, and sometimes commended, especially by the Stoics, it was occasionally condemned. "We men," says Plato, "are all by the appointment of God in a certain prison or custody, which we ought not to break out of, or run away." So likewise Cicero : "God, the supreme Governor of all things, forbids us to depart hence without his order. All pious men ought to have patience to continue in the body, as long as God shall please who sent us hither ; and not force themselves out of the world before he calls for them, lest they be found deserters of the station appointed them by God."

This is the reasoning which has generally satisfied our moralists on this subject, with the exception of some infidel sophists, and two

\* The above paragraphs, under the last head, were obviously written with a view to States in which Christianity, as a system, is formally established by law, and in which the acts of the government are officially based on this principle.

or three writers of paradoxes in the Established Church, who have defended suicide, or affected to do so. Paley has added some other considerations, drawn from his doctrine of general tendency, and from the duties which are deserted, the injuries brought upon others, &c ; but the whole only shows, that merely ethical reasoning furnishes but a feeble barrier against this offence against God, against society, and against ourselves, independent of the Holy Scriptures. There the prohibitions of a divine law lie directly against this act, and also the whole spirit of that economy under which we are placed by Almighty God.

It is very true, that, in the Old Testament history, we have a few instances of suicide among the Jews, which were not marked by any penal visitation, as among modern nations, upon the remains of the deceased ; such as the denial of honourable sepulture, &c. But this arose from the absence of all penalty in such cases in the Mosaic law. In this there was great reason ; for the subject himself is by his own direful act put beyond the reach of human visitation ; and every dishonour done to the inanimate corse is only punishment inflicted upon the innocent survivors, who, in most cases, have a large measure of suffering already entailed upon them. This was probably the humane reason for the silence of the Mosaic law as to the punishment of suicide.

But, as the Law of the two Tables is of general moral obligation, although a part also of the municipal law of the Jews ; as it concerned them as creatures, as well as subjects of the theocracy ; it takes cognizance of acts not merely as prejudicial to society, but as offensive to God, and in opposition to his will as the ruler of the world. The precept, therefore, "Thou shalt not kill," must be taken to forbid, not only murder properly so called, which is a crime against society, to be reached by human penalties, but also self destruction, which, though a crime also in a lower degree against society, no human penalties can visit, but is left, since the offender is out of the reach of man, wholly to the retribution of God. The absence of all *post mortem* penalties against suicide in the Mosaic law, is no proof, therefore, that it is not included in the prohibition, "Thou shalt not kill," any more than the absence of all penalties in the same law against a covetous disposition, proves any thing against the precept, "Thou shalt not covet," being interpreted to extend to the heart of man, although violences, thefts, and other instances of covetousness, in *action only*, are restrained in the Mosaic law by positive penalties. Some have urged it, however, as a great absurdity, to allege this commandment as a prohibition of suicide. "When a Christian moralist," says Dr. Whately.

“is called on for a direct scriptural precept against suicide, instead of replying that the Bible is not meant for a complete code of *laws*; but for a system of *motives* and *principles*, the answer frequently given is, ‘Thou shalt do no murder.’ Suicide, if any one considers the nature, and not the name of it, (self murder,) evidently wants the essential characteristic of murder, viz. the *hurt* and injury done to one’s neighbour, in depriving him of life, as well as to others by the *insecurity* they are in consequence liable to feel.”(5) All this might be correct enough, but for one error into which the writer has fallen,—that of assuming that the precept is, “Thou shalt do no *murder*,” for if that were the term used in the strict sense, we need not be told that suicide is not murder, which is only saying, that the killing one’s self is not the killing another. The authorized translation uses the word “*kill*,” “thou shalt not *kill*,” as better rendering the Hebrew word, which has a similar latitude of meaning, and is used to express fortuitous homicide, and the act of depriving of life generally, as well as murder, properly so called. That the prohibition respects the killing of others with criminal intent, all agree, and Moses describes (6) the circumstances which make that killing so criminal as to be punishable with death; but that he included the different kinds of homicide within the prohibition, is equally certain, because the Mosaic law takes cognizance of homicide, and provides for the due examination of its circumstances by the Judges, and recognises the custom of the Goel, or avenging of blood, and provides cities of refuge for the homicide; a provision which, however merciful, left the incautious manslayer subject to risks and inconveniences which had the nature of penalties. So tender was this law of the life of man! Moses, however, as a legislator, applying this great moral table of laws to practical legislation, could not extend the penalties under this prohibition farther than to these two cases, because in cases of suicide the offender is out of the reach of human power; but, as we see the precept extended beyond the case of murder with criminal intention, to homicide, and that the word used in the prohibition, “Thou shalt not *kill*” is so indefinite as to comprehend every act by which man is deprived of life, when it has no authority from God; it has been very properly extended by Divines and scriptural Moralists, not only to homicide, but from that to *suicide*. This, indeed, appears to be its import, that it prohibits the taking away of human life in all cases, without authority from God, which authority he has lodged with human governments, the “powers ordained by

(5) *Elements of Logic.*

(6) Numbers i, 35.



him" for the regulation of mankind, in what relates to the peace and welfare of society; and, whenever the life of man is taken away, except in cases sanctioned by human governments, proceeding upon the rules and principles of the word of God, then the precept, "Thou shalt not kill," is directly violated. Dr. Whately, in the passage above adverted to, objects to suicide being called *self murder*, because this criminal act has not the qualities of that by which the life of *another* is intentionally and maliciously taken away; but if the deliberate and intentional deprivation of another of life, without authority from the divine law, and from human laws established upon them, be that which, in fact, constitutes "murder," then is suicide entitled to be branded with the same odious appellation. The *circumstances* must, of necessity, differ; but the act itself has essentially the same criminality, though not in the same degree,—it is the taking away of the life of a human being, without the authority of God, the maker and proprietor of all, and therefore in opposition to, and defiance of, his authority. That suicide has very deservedly received the *morally descriptive* appellation of *self murder*, will also appear from the reason given, in the first prohibition against murder, for making this species of violence a capital crime. In the precepts delivered to the sons of Noah, and, therefore, through them, to all their descendants, that is, to all mankind, that against murder is thus delivered, (7) "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed, *for in the image of God made he man.*" There is in this reason a manifest reference to the dignity put upon human nature, by its being endowed with a *rational* and *immortal spirit*. The crime of murder is made to lie, therefore, not merely in the putting to death the animal part of man's nature, for this is merged in a higher consideration, which seems to be, the indignity done to the noblest of the works of God; and particularly, the value of life to an *immortal* being, accountable in another state for the actions done in this, and which ought, for this very reason, to be specially guarded, since death introduces him into changeless and eternal relations, which were not to lie at the mercy of human passions. Such moralists as the writer above quoted, would restrain the essential characteristics of an act of murder to the "hurt done to a neighbour in depriving him of life," and the "insecurity" inflicted upon society; but in this ancient and universal law, it is made eminently to consist in contempt of the *image* of God in man, and its interference with man's *immortal* interests and relations as a

(7) Genesis ix, 6.

deathless spirit ; and if so, then suicide bears upon it these deep and awful characteristics of murder. It is much more wisely said by Bishop Kidder, in his remarks upon this passage, that the reason given,—“for in the image of God made he man,”—is a farther aggravation of the sin of murder. It is a great trespass upon God, as it destroys his likeness ; and *self murder*, upon this account, is forbidden as well as the killing of others.

Whatever weight may be due to the considerations urged by the moralists above quoted against this crime,—and every motive which may deter men from listening to the first temptation to so direful an act, is important,—yet the guards of Christianity must be acknowledged to be of a more powerful kind. For the principles of our religion cannot be understood without our perceiving, that, of almost all other crimes, wilful suicide ought most to be dreaded. It is a sin against God's *authority*. He is “the God of our life ;” in “his hand our breath is ;” and we usurp his sovereignty when we presume to dispose of it. As resulting from the pressure of mortifications of spirit, or the troubles of life, it becomes a sin, as arraigning his providential wisdom and goodness. It implies either an atheistic denial of God's government, or a rebellious opposition to his permissive acts or direct appointments ; it cannot be committed, therefore, when the mind is sound, but in the absence of all the Christian virtues, of humility, self denial, patience, and the fear and love of God, and only under the influence of pride, worldliness, forgetfulness of God, and contempt of him. It hides from the mind the realities of a future judgment, or it defies them ; and it is consummated by the character of *unpardonableness*, because it places the criminal at once beyond the reach of mercy.

If no man has the right, then, to dispose of his own life by suicide, he has no right to hazard it in duels. The silence of the pulpits in those quarters where only the warning voice of the Christian Preacher can be heard by that class of persons most addicted to this crime, is exceedingly disgraceful ; for there can be little doubt that the palliating views of this practice taken by some ethical writers of celebrity, together with the loose reasonings of men of the world, have, from this neglect, exercised much influence upon many minds ; and the consequence has been that hundreds, in this professedly Christian country, have fallen victims to false notions of honour, and to imperfect notions of the obligations of their religion. Paley has the credit of dealing with this vice with greater decision than many of our moralists. He classes it very justly with *murder*. “Murder is forbidden ; and wherever human life is deliberately taken away, otherwise than by public

authority, there is murder.”(8) “If unauthorized laws of honour be allowed to create exceptions to divine prohibitions, there is an end to all morality, as founded in the will of the Deity; and the obligation of every duty may, at one time or other, be discharged by the caprice and fluctuations of fashion.”(9) The fact is, that we must either renounce Christianity, or try all cases by its rule. The question of the lawfulness of duelling is thus promptly disposed of. If I have received a personal injury, I am bound to forgive it, unless it be of such a nature that it becomes a duty to punish it by due course of law; but even then not in the spirit of revenge, but out of respect to the peace and welfare of society. If I have given offence, I am bound to acknowledge it, and to make reparation; and if my adversary will not be satisfied, and insists upon my staking my life against his own, no considerations of reputation or disgrace, the good or ill opinion of men, who form their judgments in utter disregard to the laws of God, can have any more weight in this, than in any other case of immorality. The sin of duelling unites, in fact, the two crimes of suicide and of murder. He who falls in a duel is guilty of suicide, by voluntarily exposing himself to be slain; he by whom he falls is guilty of murder, as having shed man’s blood without authority. Nay, the guilt of the two crimes unites in the same person. He who falls is a suicide in fact, and the murderer of another in intention; he by whom he falls is a murderer in fact, and so far a suicide as to have put his own life into imminent peril, in contempt of God’s authority over him. He has contemned the “image of God in man,” both in himself and in his brother. And where duels are not fatal on either side, the whole guilt is chargeable upon the parties, as a sin *purposed in the heart*, although, in that case, there is space left for repentance.

Life, then, is not disposable at the option of man, nor is PROPERTY itself, without respect to the rules of the divine law; and here, too, we shall perceive the feebleness of the considerations urged, in merely moral systems, to restrain prodigal and wasteful expenditure, hazardous speculations, and even the obvious evil of gambling. Many weighty arguments, we grant, may be drawn against all these from the claims of children, and near relations, whose interests we are bound to regard, and whom we can have no right to expose even to the chance of being involved in the same ruin with ourselves. But these reasons can have little sway with those who fancy that they can keep within the verge of

(8) *Moral and Political Philosophy.*(9) *Ibid.*



extreme danger, and who will plead their "natural right" to do what they will with their own. In cases, too, where there may be no children or dependent relatives, the individual would feel less disposed to acknowledge the force of this class of reasons, or think them quite inapplicable to his case. But Christianity enjoins "moderation" of the desires, and temperance in the gratification of the appetites, and in the show and splendour of life, even where a state of opulence can command them. It has its admonitions against the "love of money;" against "*willing* to be rich," except as "*the Lord* may prosper a man" in the usual track and course of honest industry,—authoritative cautions which lie directly against hazardous speculations; and it warns such as despise them of the consequent "temptations" and spiritual "snares," destructive to habits of piety, and ultimately to the soul, into which they must fall,—considerations of vast moment, but peculiar to itself, and quite out of the range of those moral systems which have no respect to its authority. Against gambling, in its most innocent forms, it sets its injunction, "Redeeming the time;" and in its more aggravated cases, it opposes to it not only the above considerations, as it springs from an unhallowed "love of money;" but the whole of that spirit and temper which it makes to be obligatory upon us, and which those evil and often diabolical excitements, produced by this habit, so fearfully violate. Above all, it makes property a *trust*, to be employed under the rules prescribed by Him who, as Sovereign Proprietor, has deposited it with us, which rules require its *use* certainly; (for the covetous are excluded from the kingdom of God;) but its use, first, for the supply of our wants, according to our station, with moderation; then, as a provision for children, and dependent relatives; finally, for purposes of charity and religion, in which "grace," as before stated, it requires us "to abound;"—and it enforces all these by placing us under the responsibility of accounting to God himself, in person, for the abuse or neglect of this trust, at the General Judgment.

With respect to the Third natural right, that of LIBERTY, it is a question which can seldom or never occur in the present state of society, whether a man is free to part with it for a valuable consideration. Under the law of Moses, this was certainly allowed; but a Christian man stands on different ground. To a Pagan he would not be at liberty to enslave himself, because he is not at liberty to put to hazard his soul's interests, which might be interfered with by the control given to a Pagan over his time and conduct. To a Christian he could not be at liberty to alienate

himself, because, the spirit of Christianity being opposed to slavery, the one is not at liberty to buy, nor the other to sell, for reasons before given. I conclude, therefore, that no man can lawfully divest himself absolutely of his personal liberty, for any consideration whatever.

To the natural rights of life, property, and liberty, may be added the right of CONSCIENCE.

By this is meant the right which a man has to profess his own opinions on subjects of religion, and to worship God in the mode which he deems most acceptable to him. Whether this, however, be strictly a *natural* right, like the three above mentioned, may be a subject of dispute, for then it would be *universal*, which is, perhaps, carrying the point too far. The matter may best be determined by considering the ground of that right, which differs much from the others we have mentioned. The right to life results both from the appointment of God, and the absence of a superior or countervailing right in another to deprive us of it, until, at least, we forfeit that right to some third party, by some voluntary act of our own. This also applies to the rights of property and liberty. The right of professing particular religious opinions, and practising a particular mode of worship, can only rest upon a conviction that these are duties enjoined upon us by God. For since religion is a matter which concerns man and God, a man must know that it is obligatory upon him as a duty, and under fear of God's displeasure, to profess his opinions openly, and to practise some particular mode of worship.

To apply this to the case of persons all sincerely receiving the Bible as a revelation from God. Unquestionably it is a part of that revelation, that those who receive its doctrines should profess and attempt to propagate them; nor can they profess them in any other way than they interpret the meaning of the book which contains them. Equally clear is it, that the worship of God is enjoined upon man, and that publicly, and in collective bodies. From these circumstances, therefore, it results, that it is a *duty* which man owes to God to profess and to endeavour to propagate his honest views of the meaning of the Scriptures, and to worship God in the mode which he sincerely conceives is made obligatory upon him, by the same sacred volume. It is from this *duty* that the *right* of conscience flows, and from this alone; and it thus becomes a right of that nature which no earthly power has any authority to obstruct, because it can have no power to alter or to destroy the obligations which Almighty God, the Supreme Governor, has laid upon his creatures.

It does not, however, follow from this statement, that human governments, professing to be regulated themselves by the principles of Christianity, have no authority to take cognizance of the *manner* in which this right of conscience is exercised. They are "ordained of God" to uphold their subjects in the exercise of their just rights respectively, and that without partiality. If, therefore, under a plea of conscience, one sect should interfere to obstruct others in a peaceable profession of their opinions, and a peaceable exercise of their worship; or should exercise its own so as to be vexatiously intrusive upon others, and in defiance of some rival sect; as for instance, in a Protestant country, if Roman Catholics were to carry the objects of their idolatry about the streets, instead of contenting themselves with worshipping in their own way, in their own chapels. In all such cases the government might be bound, in respect of the rights of other classes of its subjects, to interfere by restraint, nor would it then trespass upon the rights of conscience, justly interpreted. Again, since "the powers that be are ordained of God," for "a terror to evil doers, and a praise to them that do well;" which evil doing and well doing are to be interpreted according to the common sense and agreement of mankind, and plainly refer to moral actions only; should any sect or individual, ignorantly, fanatically, or corruptly, so interpret the Scriptures as to suppose themselves free from moral obligation, and then proceed to practise their tenets by any such acts as violate the laws of well-ordered society, or by admitting indecencies into their modes of worship, as some fanatics in former times who used to strip themselves naked in their assemblies; here too a government would have the right to disregard the plea of conscience if set up, and to restrain such acts, and the teachers of them, as pernicious to society. But if the opinions professed by any sect, however erroneous they may be, and however zealously a sound and faithful Christian might be called by a sense of duty to denounce them as involving a corrupt conscience, or no conscience at all, and as dangerous or fatal to the salvation of those that hold them, do not interfere with the peace, the morals, and good order of society; it is not within the province of a government to animadvert upon them by force of law; since it was not established to judge of men's sincerity in religion, nor of the tendency of opinions as they affect their salvation, but only to uphold the morals and good order of the community. So, likewise, what has been called by some worship, has been sometimes marked with great excesses of enthusiasm, and with even ridiculous follies; but if the peace of others, and the morals of society, are



not thereby endangered, it is not the part of the magistracy to interfere, at least by authority.

In cases, however, where political opinions are connected with religious notions, and the plea of conscience is set up as an "unalienable right," to sanction their propagation, a government may be justified in interposing, not indeed on the ground that it judges the conscience to be erring and corrupt, but for its own just support when endangered by such opinions. Sects of religious republicans have sometimes appeared under a monarchical government,—the Fifth Monarchy Fanatics, for instance, who, according to their interpretation of the kingdom of Christ, regarded the existence of all earthly monarchies as inimical to it, and, believing that the period of its establishment was come, thought it impiety to acknowledge any earthly sovereign, as being contrary to their allegiance to Christ. When such notions are confined to a few persons, it is wise in a government to leave them to their own absurdities as their most potent cure; but should a fanaticism of this kind seize upon a multitude, and render them restless and seditious, the State would be justifiable in restraining them by force, although a mistaken conscience might be mixed up with the error. We may therefore conclude, that as to religious sects, the plea of conscience does not take their conduct out of the cognizance of the civil magistrate when the peace, the morality, and safety of society are infringed upon; but that otherwise, the rights of conscience are inviolable, even when it is obviously erroneous, and, religiously considered, as to the individual dangerous. The case then is one which is to be dealt with by instruction, and moral suasion. It belongs to public instructors, and to all well-informed persons, to correct an ignorant and perverse conscience, by friendly and compassionate admonition; and the power of the magistrate is only lawfully interposed, when the effect complained of so falls upon society as to infringe upon the rights of others, or upon the public morals and peace;—but even then the facts ought to be obvious, and not constructive.

The case of those who reject the revelation of the Scriptures must be considered on its own merits.

Simple Deism, in a Christian country, may lay a foundation for such a plea of conscience as the *State* ought to admit, although it should be rejected by a sound theologian. The Deist derives his religion by inference from what he supposes discoverable of the attributes and will of God from nature, and the course of the Divine Government. Should he conclude that among such indications of the will of God there are those which make it his *duty*

to profess his opinions, to attack the evidences of our Divine Revelation as of insufficient proof, and to worship God in a manner more agreeable to his system, it would be too delicate an interference of a government with a question of conscience, to be allowed to make itself the judge whether any such conviction could be conscientiously entertained; although by Divines, in their character of public instructors, this would properly be denied. Absolutely to shut out, by penal laws, all discussion on the evidences of Divine Revelation, would probably make secret infidels in such numbers as would more than counterbalance the advantage which would be gained, and that by the suspicion which it would excite. But this principle would not extend to the protection of any doctrine directly subversive of justice, chastity, or humanity; for then society would be attacked, and the natural as well as civil rights of man invaded. Nor can opprobrious and blasphemous attacks upon Christianity be covered by a plea of conscience and right, since these are not necessary to argument. It is evident that conscience, in the most liberal construction of the term, cannot be pleaded in their behalf; and they are not innocent even as to society.

To those systems which deny the immortality of the soul, and, consequently, a state of future retribution, and which assume any of the forms of Atheism, no toleration can, consistently with duty, be extended by a Christian government. The reasons of this exception are, 1. That the very basis of its jurisprudence, which is founded upon a belief in God, the sanctity of oaths, and a future state, is assaulted by such doctrines, and that it cannot co-exist with them: 2. That they are subversive of the morals of the people: and 3. That no conscience can be pleaded by their votaries for the avowal of such tenets. When the existence of a God and his moral government are denied, no conscience can exist to require the publication of such tenets; for this cannot be a duty imposed upon them by God, since they deny his existence. No right of conscience is therefore violated when they are restrained by civil penalties. Such persons cannot have the advantages of society, without submitting to the principles on which it is founded; and as they profess to believe that they are not accountable beings, their silence cannot be a guilt to them; they give up the argument drawn from conscience, and from its rights, which have no existence at all but as founded upon REVEALED DUTY.

The second branch of Justice we have denominated *ECONOMICAL*: it respects those relations which grow out of the existence of men in *families*.

The first is that of *Husband* and *Wife*, and arises out of the institution of Marriage.

The foundation of the marriage union is the will of God that the human race should "increase and multiply," but only through a chaste and restricted conjunction of one man and one woman, united by their free vows in a bond made by the Divine law indissoluble, except by death or by adultery. The will of God as to marriage is, however, general, and is not so expressed as to lay an imperative obligation to marry upon every one, in all circumstances. There was no need of the law being directed to each individual as such, since the instincts of nature, and the affection of love planted in human beings, were sufficient to guarantee its general observance. The very bond of marriage too being the preference founded upon love, rendered the act one in which choice and feeling were to have great influence; nor could a prudent regard to circumstances be excluded. Cases were possible in which such a preference as is essential to the felicity and advantages of that state might not be excited, nor the due degree of affection to warrant the union called forth. There might be cases in which circumstances might be inimical to the full discharge of some of the duties of that state; as the comfortable maintenance of a wife, and a proper provision for children. Some individuals would also be called by providence to duties in the church and in the world, which might better be performed in a single and unfettered life; and seasons of persecution, as we are taught by St. Paul, have rendered it an act of Christian prudence to abstain even from this honourable estate. The general rule, however, is in favour of marriage; and all exceptions seem to require justification on some principle grounded upon an *equal* or a *paramount* obligation.

One intention of marriage in its original institution was, the production of the greatest number of healthy children; and that it secures this object, is proved from the universal fact, that population increases more, and is of better quality, where marriage is established and its sacred laws are observed, than where the intercourse of the sexes is promiscuous. A second end was the establishment of the interesting and influential relations of acknowledged children and parents, from which the most endearing, meliorating, and pure affections result, and which could not exist without marriage. It is indeed scarcely possible even to sketch the numerous and important effects of this sacred institution, which at once displays, in the most affecting manner, the Divine benevolence and the Divine wisdom. It secures the preservation and tender nurture of children, by concentrating an affection upon



them, which is dissipated and lost wherever fornication prevails. It creates conjugal tenderness, filial piety, the attachment of brothers and sisters, and of collateral relations. It softens the feelings; and increases the benevolence of society at large, by bringing all these affections to operate powerfully within each of those domestic and family circles of which society is composed. It excites industry and economy; and secures the communication of moral knowledge, and the inculcation of civility, and early habits of submission to authority, by which men are fitted to become the subjects of a public government, and without which, perhaps, no government could be sustained but by brute force, or, it may be, not sustained at all. These are some of the innumerable benefits by which marriage promotes human happiness, and the peace and strength of the community at large.

The institution of marriage not only excludes the promiscuous intercourse of the sexes, but polygamy also; a practice almost equally fatal to the kind affections, to education, to morals, and to purity. The argument of our Lord with the Pharisees, on the subject of divorce, Matt. xix, assumes it as even acknowledged by the Jews, that marriage was not only of Divine institution, but that it consisted in the union of two only,—“*they twain* shall be one flesh.” This was the law of marriage given at first, not to Adam and Eve only, but prospectively to all their descendants. The first instance of polygamy was that of Lamech, and this has no sanction from the Scripture; which may be observed of other instances in the Old Testament. They were opposed to the original law, and in all cases appear to have been punished with many afflictive visitations. The Mosaic law, although polygamy appears to have been practised under it, gives no direct countenance to the practice; which intimates that, as in the case of divorce, the connivance was not intended to displace the original institution. Hence, in the language of the Old Testament, as well as of the New, the terms husband and wife in the singular number continually occur; and a passage in the prophet Malachi is so remarkable, as to warrant the conclusion, that among the pious Jews, the original law was never wholly out of sight. “Yet ye say, Wherefore? Because the Lord hath been witness between thee, and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously, yet she is thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant. And did not he make one?”—(one woman)—“Yet had he the residue of the spirit?”—(and therefore could have made more than one)—“And wherefore one?” “That he might seek a godly seed,” is the answer, which strongly shows how closely connected in the prophet’s mind were

the circumstances of piety in the offspring and the restraint of marriage to one wife only ; for he thus glances at one of the obvious evils of polygamy, its deteriorating moral influence upon children. If, however, in some instances the practice of the Jews fell short of the strictness of the original law of marriage, that law is now fully restored by Christ. In a discourse with the Pharisees, he not only re-enacts that law, but guards against its evasion by the practice of divorce ; and asserts the marriage union to be indissoluble by any thing but adultery. The argument of our Lord in this discourse is, indeed, equally conclusive against polygamy and against the practice of divorce ; for “if,” says Dr. Paley, “whoever putteth away his wife and marrieth another committeth adultery, he who marrieth another, the first wife being living, is no less guilty of adultery ; because the adultery does not consist in the repudiation of the first wife ; for, however cruel and unjust that may be, it is not adultery ; but in entering into a second marriage, during the legal existence and obligation of the first.”

Nature itself comes in also as a confirmation of this original law. In births, there is a small surplusage of males over females ; which, being reduced by the more precarious life of males, and by the accidents to which more than females they are exposed from wars and dangerous employments, brings the number of males and females to a par, and shows that in the order of providence a man ought to have but one wife ; and that where polygamy is not allowed, every woman may have a husband. This equality, too, is found in all countries ; although some licentious writers have attempted to deny it upon unsound evidence.

Another end of marriage was, the prevention of fornication ; and as this is done, not only by providing for a lawful gratification of the sexual appetite ; but more especially by that mutual affection upon which marriages, when contracted according to the will of God, are founded, this conjunction necessarily requires that degree of love between the contracting parties which produces a preference of each other above every man or woman in the world. Wherever this degree of affection does not exist, it may therefore be concluded that the rite of marriage is profaned, and the greatest security for the accomplishment of its moral ends weakened or destroyed. Interest, compliance with the views of family connexions, caprice, or corporal attractions, it may be therefore concluded, are not in themselves lawful grounds of marriage, as tending, without affection, to frustrate the intention of God in its institution ; to which end all are bound to subject themselves. On the other hand, since love is often a delusive and sickly affection.

exceedingly temporary and uncertain, when it is unconnected with judgment and prudence ; and also because marriages are for the most part contracted by the young and inexperienced, whose passions are then strongest when their judgments are most immature ; in no step in life is the counsel of others more necessary, and in no case ought it to be sought with greater docility than in this. A proper respect to the circumstances of age, fitness, &c, ought never to be superseded by the plea of mere affection ; although no circumstances can justify marriage without that degree of affection which produces an absolute preference.

Whether marriage be a civil or a religious contract has been a subject of dispute. The truth seems to be that it is both. It has its engagements to men, and its vows to God. A Christian State recognises marriage as a branch of public morality, and a source of civil peace and strength. It is connected with the peace of society by assigning one woman to one man, and the State protects him, therefore, in her exclusive possession. Christianity, by allowing divorce in the event of adultery, supposes, also, that the crime must be proved by proper evidence before the civil magistrate ; and lest divorce should be the result of unfounded suspicion, or be made a cover for license, the decision of the case could safely be lodged nowhere else. Marriage, too, as placing one human being more completely under the power of another than any other relation, requires laws for the protection of those who are thus so exposed to injury. The distribution of society into families, also, can only be an instrument for promoting the order of the community, by the cognizance which the law takes of the head of a family, and by making him responsible, to a certain extent, for the conduct of those under his influence. Questions of property are also involved in marriage and its issue. The law must, therefore, for these and many other weighty reasons, be cognizant of marriage ; must prescribe various regulations respecting it ; require publicity of the contract ; and guard some of the great injunctions of religion in the matter by penalties. In no well ordered state can marriage, therefore, be so exclusively left to religion as to shut out the cognizance and control of the State. But then those who would have the whole matter to lie between the parties themselves, and the civil magistrate, appear wholly to forget that marriage is a solemn religious act, in which vows are made to God by both persons, who, when the rite is properly understood, engage to abide by all those laws with which he has guarded the institution ; to love and cherish each other ; and to remain faithful to each other until death. For if, at least, they profess belief in Christianity,



whatever duties are laid upon husbands and wives in Holy Scripture, they engage to obey, by the very act of their contracting marriage. The question, then, is whether such vows to God as are necessarily involved in marriage, are to be left between the parties and God privately, or whether they ought to be publicly made before his Ministers and the Church. On this the Scriptures are silent; but though Michaelis has showed (1) that the Priests under the law were not appointed to celebrate marriage; yet in the practice of the modern Jews, it is a religious ceremony, the chief Rabbi of the synagogue being present, and prayers being appointed for the occasion.(2) This renders it probable that the character of the ceremony under the law, from the most ancient times, was a religious one. The more direct connexion of marriage with religion in Christian States, by assigning its celebration to the Ministers of religion, appears to be a very beneficial custom, and one which the State has a right to enjoin. For since the welfare and morals of society are so much interested in the performance of the mutual duties of the married state; and since those duties have a religious as well as a civil character, it is most proper that some provision should be made for explaining those duties; and for this a standing form of marriage is best adapted. By acts of religion, also, they are more solemnly impressed upon the parties. When this is prescribed in any State, it becomes a Christian cheerfully, and even thankfully, to comply with a custom of so important a tendency, as matter of conscientious subjection to lawful authority, although no scriptural precept can be pleaded for it. That the ceremony should be confined to the Clergy of an Established Church is a different consideration. We are inclined to think that the religious effect would be greater, were the Ministers of each religious body to be authorized by the State to celebrate marriages among their own people, due provision being made for the regular and secure registry of them, and to prevent the civil laws respecting marriage from being evaded.

When this important contract is once made, then certain *rights* are acquired by the parties mutually, who are also bound by reciprocal *duties*, in the fulfilment of which the practical "righteousness" of each consists. Here, also, the superior character of the morals of the New Testament, as well as their higher authority, is illustrated. It may, indeed, be within the scope of mere moralists to show that fidelity, and affection, and all the courtesies necessary to maintain affection, are rationally obligatory upon those who are

(1) *Commentaries on the Laws of Moses.*

(2) ALLEN's *Modern Judaism.*

connected by the nuptial bond ; but in Christianity that fidelity is guarded by the express law, "Thou shalt not commit adultery ;" and by our Lord's exposition of the spirit of that law, which forbids the indulgence of loose thoughts and desires, and places the purity of the heart under the guardianship of that hallowed fear which his authority tends to inspire. Affection, too, is made a matter of diligent cultivation upon considerations, and by a standard, peculiar to our religion. Husbands are placed in a relation to their wives, similar to that which Christ bears to his Church, and his example is thus made their rule : As Christ "gave himself," his life, "for the Church," Eph. v, 25, so are they to hazard life for their wives. As Christ saves his Church, so is it the bounden duty of husbands, to endeavour, by every possible means, to promote the religious edification and salvation of their wives. The connexion is thus exalted into a religious one ; and when love which knows no abatement, protection at the hazard of life, and a tender and constant solicitude for the salvation of a wife, are thus enjoined, the greatest possible security is established for the exercise of kindness and fidelity. The *oneness* of this union is also more forcibly stated in Scripture than any where beside : "They twain shall be one flesh." "So ought men to love their wives *as their own bodies* ; he that loveth his wife *loveth himself*. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the Church." Precept and illustration can go no higher than this ; and nothing evidently is wanting either of direction or authority to raise the state of marriage into the highest, most endearing, and sanctified relation in which two human beings can stand to each other. The duties of wives are reciprocal to those of husbands. The outline in the Note below (3) comprises both : it presents a

## (3) PARTICULAR DUTIES OF WIVES.

*Subjection*, the generall head of all wives duties.

Acknowledgment of an husbands superiority.

A due esteeme of her owne husband as the best for her, and worthy of honour on her part.

An inward wive-like fear.

An outward reverend carriage towards her husband, which consisteth in a wive-like sobrietic, mildnesse, curtiessie, and modestie in apparel.

## PARTICULAR DUTIES OF HUSBANDS.

*Wisdom and love*, the generall heads of all husbands duties.

Acknowledgment of a wives neere conjunction and fellowship with her husband.

A good esteeme of his own wife as the best for him, and worthy of love on his part.

An inward intire affection.

An outward amiable carriage towards his wife, which consisteth in an husband-like gravity, mildnesse, courteous acceptaunce of her curtiessie, and allowing her to wear fit apparel.

series of obligations which are obviously drawn from the New Testament; but which nothing except that could furnish. The extract is made from an old writer, and, although expressed in

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| <p>Reverend speech to and of her husband.</p> <p>Obedience.</p> <p>Forbearing to do without, or against her husband's consent, such things as he hath power to order, as, to dispose and order the common goods of the familie, and the allowance for it, or children, servants, cattell, guests, journies, &amp;c.</p> <p>A ready yielding to what her husband would have done. This is manifested by a willingness to dwell where he will, to come when he calls, and to do what he requireth.</p> <p>A patient bearing of any reproofe, and a ready redressing of that for which she is justly reprov'd.</p> <p>Contentment with her husbands present estate.</p> <p>Such a subjection as may stand with her subjection to Christ.</p> <p>Such a subjection as the Church yieldeth to Christ, which is sincere, pure, cheerful, constant, for conscience sake.</p> | <p>Mild and loving speech to and of his wife.</p> <p>A wise maintaining his authority, and forbearing to exact all that is in his power.</p> <p>A ready yielding to his wives request, and giving a generall consent and liber-tie unto her to order the affaires of the house, children, servants, &amp;c. And a free allowing her something to bestow as she seeth occasion.</p> <p>A forbearing to exact more than his wife is willing to doe, or to force her to dwell where it is not meet, or to enjoyne her to do things that are unmeet in themselves, or against her mind.</p> <p>A wise ordering of reproofe, not using it without just and weighty cause, and then privately, and meekly.</p> <p>A provident care for his wife, according to his abilities.</p> <p>A forbearing to exact any thing which stands not with a good conscience.</p> <p>Such a love as Christ beareth to the Church, and man to himselfe, which is first free, in deed and truth, pure, chaste, constant.</p> |
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ABERRATIONS OF WIVES FROM THEIR PARTICULAR DUTIES.

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ABERRATIONS OF HUSBANDS FROM THEIR PARTICULAR DUTIES.

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| <p><i>Ambition</i>, the generall ground of the aberrations of wives.</p> <p>A conceit that wives are their husbands equals.</p> <p>A conceit that she could better subject herselfe to any other man than to her own husband.</p> <p>An inward despising of her husband.</p> <p>Unreverend behaviour towards her husband, manifested by lightnesse, sullen-nesse, scornefulnesse, and vanity in her attire.</p> <p>Unreverend speech to and of her husband.</p> <p>A stout standing on her owne will.</p> <p>A peremptory undertaking to do things as she list, without and against her husbands consent. This is manifested</p> | <p><i>Want of wisdom and love</i>, the generall groupds of the aberrations of husbands.</p> <p>Too mean account of wives.</p> <p>A preposterous conceit of his owne wife to be the worst of all, and that he could love any but her.</p> <p>A stoicall disposition, without all heat of affection.</p> <p>An unbecoming carriage towards his wife, manifested by his baseness, tyrannicall usage of her, loftinesse, rashnesse, and nigardlinesse.</p> <p>Harsh, proud, and bitter speeches to and of his wife.</p> <p>Losing of his authority.</p> <p>Too much strictnesse over his wife. This is manifested by restraining her from doing any thing without particular and</p> |
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homely phrase, will be admired for discrimination and comprehensiveness.

THE DUTIES OF CHILDREN is a branch of Christian morality which receives both illustration and authority in a very remarkable and peculiar manner from the Scriptures. "*Honour thy father and thy mother,*" is a precept which occupies a place in those Tables of Law which were written at first by the finger of God; and is, as the Apostle Paul notes, "the first commandment with promise." The meaning of the term *honour* is comprehensive, and imports, as appears from various passages in which it occurs, reverence, affection, and grateful obedience. It expresses at once a *principle* and a *feeling*, each of which must influence the practice; one binding obedience upon the conscience, the other rendering it the free effusion of the heart; one securing the great points of duty, and the other giving rise to a thousand tender sentiments and courtesies which mutually meliorate the temper, and open one of the richest sources of domestic felicity.

The honouring of parents is likewise enforced in Scripture, by a temporal promise. This is not peculiar to the Law; for when the Apostle refers to this "as the first commandment with promise," and adds, "that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest live long on the earth," Eph. vi, 3, 4, he clearly intimates that this promise is carried forward into the Christian dispensation; and though it is undoubtedly modified by the circumstances of an

by privy purloyning his goods, taking allowance, ordering children, servants, and cattell, feasting strangers, making journeyes and vows, as herselfe listeth.

An obstinate standing upon her owne will, making her husband dwell where she will, and refusing to goe when he calls, or to doe any thing upon his command.

Disdaine at reproofe: giving word for word: and waxing worse for being reprov'd.

Discontent at her husbands estate.

Such a pleasing of her husband as offendeth Christ.

Such a subjection as is most unlike to the Church's, viz. fained, forced, fickle, &c.

expresse consent, taking too strict account of her, and allowing her no more than is needfull for her owne private use.

Too lordly a standing upon the highest step of his authority: being too frequent, insolent, and peremptory, in commanding things frivolous, unmeet, and against his wifes minde and conscience.

Rashnesse and bitterness in reproving: and that too frequently, on slight occasions, and disgracefully before children, servants, and strangers.

A carelessse neglect of his wife, and niggardly dealing with her, and that in her weaknesse.

A commanding of unlawfull things.

Such a disposition as is most unlike to Christ's, and to that which a man beareth to himselfe, viz. compliment, impure, for by respects, inconstant, &c.

economy which is not so much founded upon temporal promises as the Law, it retains its full force as a general declaration of special favour on the part of God. This duty also derives a most influential and affecting illustration from the conduct of our Lord, who was himself an instance of subjection to parents ; of the kindest behaviour to them ; and who, amidst his agonies on the cross, commended his weeping mother to the special regard of the beloved disciple, John, charging him with her care and support as a "son," in his own stead. In no system of mere ethics, certainly, is this great duty, on which so much of human interest and felicity depends, and which exerts so much influence upon society, thus illustrated, and thus enforced.

The duties of children may be thus sketched.

LOVE, which is founded upon esteem and reverence, comprises gratitude also ; no small degree of which is obligatory upon every child for the unwearied cares, labours, and kindness of parental affection. In the few unhappy instances in which esteem for a parent can have little place, gratitude, at least, ought to remain ; nor can any case arise in which the obligation of *filial love* can be cancelled.

REVERENCE, which consists in that honourable esteem of parents which children ought to cherish in their hearts, and from which springs on the one hand the desire to please, and on the other the fear to offend. The fear of a child is, however, opposed to the fear of a slave ; the latter has respect chiefly to the *punishment* which may be inflicted ; but the other being mixed with love, and the desire to be loved, has respect to the *offence* which may be taken by a parent, his grief, and his displeasure. Hence the fear of God, as a grace of the Spirit in the regenerate, is compared to the fear of children. This reverential regard due to parents has its external expression in all honour and civility, whether in words or actions. The behaviour is to be submissive, the speech respectful, reproof is to be borne by them with meekness, and the impatience of parents sustained in silence. Children are bound to close their eyes as much as possible upon the failings and infirmities of the authors of their being, and always to speak of them honourably among themselves, and in the presence of others. "The hearts of all men go along with Noah in laying punishment upon Ham for his unnatural and profane derision, and love the memory of those sons that would not see themselves, nor suffer others to be the witnesses of the miscarriages of their father." In the duty of "honouring" parents, is also included their support when in necessity. This appears from our Lord's application of this commandment of the Law in his

reproof of the Pharisees, who, if they had made a vow of their property, thought it then lawful to withhold assistance from their parents, Matt. xv, 4-6.

To affection and reverence, is to be added,

OBEEDIENCE, which is universal: "Children, obey your parents *in all things*;" with only one restriction, which respects the consciences of children, when at age to judge for themselves. The Apostle therefore adds, "*in the Lord*." That this limits the obedience of children to the lawful commands of parents, is clear also from our Lord's words, "If any love father or mother more than me he is not worthy of me." God is to be loved and obeyed above all. In all lawful things the rule is absolute; and the obedience, like that we owe to God, ought to be cheerful and unwearied. Should it chance to cross our inclinations, this will be no excuse for hesitancy, much less, for refusal.

One of the principal cases in which this principle is often most severely tried, is that of marriage. The general rule clearly is, that neither son nor daughter ought to marry against the command of a father, with whom the prime authority of the family is lodged; nor even without the consent of the mother, should the father be willing, if she can find any weighty reason for her objection; for, although the authority of the mother is subordinate and secondary, yet is she entitled to obedience from the child. There is, however, a considerable difference between marrying at the command of a parent, and marrying against his prohibition. In the first case, children are more at liberty than in the other; yet even here, the wishes of parents in this respect are to be taken into most serious consideration, with a preponderating desire to yield to them: but if a child feels that his affections still refuse to run in the course of the parents' wishes; if he is conscious that he cannot love his intended wife "as himself," as "his own flesh;" he is prohibited by a higher rule, which presents an insuperable barrier to his compliance. In this case the child is at liberty to refuse, if it is done deliberately, and expressed with modesty and proper regret at not being able to comply, for the reasons stated; and every parent ought to dispense freely with the claim of obedience. But to marry in opposition to a parent's express prohibition, is a very grave case. The general rule lies directly against this act of disobedience, as against all others, and the violation of it is therefore *sin*. And what blessing can be expected to follow such marriages? or rather, what curse may not be feared to follow them? The law of God is transgressed, and the image of his authority in parents is despised. Those exceptions to this rule which can be justified, are very few.



In no case but where the parties have attained the full legal age of *twenty-one* years, ought an exception to be even considered; but it may perhaps be allowed, 1. When the sole objection of the parent is the marriage of his child with a person fearing God. 2. When the sole reason given is, a wish to keep a child unmarried from caprice, interest, or other motive, which no parent has a right to require, when the child is of legal age. 3. When the objections are simply those of prejudice, without reasonable ground; but in this case, the child ought not to assume to be the sole judge of the parent's reasons; and would not be at liberty to act, unless supported by the opinion of impartial and judicious friends, whose advice and mediation ought to be asked, in order that, in so delicate an affair, he or she may proceed with a clear conscience.

The persuading a daughter to elope from her parents' house, where the motive is no other than the wilful following of personal affection, which spurns at parental control and authority, must, therefore, be considered as a great crime. It induces the daughter to commit a very criminal act of disobedience; and, on the part of the man, it is a worse kind of felony than stealing the property of another. "For children are much more properly a man's own than his goods, and the more highly to be esteemed, by how much reasonable creatures are to be preferred before senseless things." (4)

THE DUTIES OF PARENTS are exhibited with equal clearness in the Scriptures, and contain a body of most important practical instructions.

The first duty is LOVE, which, although a natural instinct, is yet to be cultivated and nourished by Christians under a sense of duty, and by frequent meditation upon all those important and interesting relations in which religion has placed them and their offspring. The duty of sustentation and care, therefore, under the most trying circumstances, is imperative upon parents; for, though this is not directly enjoined, it is supposed necessarily to follow from that parental love which the Scriptures inculcate; and also, because the denial of either to infants would destroy them, and thus the unnatural parent would be involved in the crime of murder.

To this follows INSTRUCTION, care for the mind succeeding the nourishment and care of the body. This relates to the providing such an education for children as is suited to their condition, and by which they may be fitted to gain a reputable livelihood when they are of age to apply themselves to business. But it specially relates to their instruction in the doctrines of holy writ. This is

(4) GOUGE *On Relative Duties*.

clearly what the Apostle Paul means, Eph. vi, 4, by directing parents to "bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." A parent is considered in Scripture as a **PRIEST** in his own family, which is a view of this relation not to be found in ethical writers, or deducible from any principles from which they would *infer* parental duties, independently of revelation; and from this it derives a most exalted character. The offices of sacrifice, intercession, and religious instruction, were all performed by the Patriarchs; and, as we have already seen, although, under the Law, the *offering* of sacrifices was restrained to the appointed Priesthood, yet was it still the duty of the head of the family to bring his sacrifices for immolation in the prescribed manner; and so far was the institution of public teachers from being designed to supersede the father's office, that the heads of the Jewish families are specially enjoined to teach the law to their children diligently, and daily, Deut. vi, 7. Under the same view does Christianity regard the heads of its families, as Priests in their houses, offering spiritual gifts and sacrifices, and as the religious instructors of their children. Hence it is, in the passage above quoted, that "fathers" are commanded "to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord;" or, in other words, in the knowledge of the doctrines, duties, motives, and hopes of the Christian religion. This is a work, therefore, which belongs to the very office of a father as the Priest of his household, and cannot be neglected by him, but at his own, and his children's peril. Nor is it to be occasionally and cursorily performed, but so that the object may be attained, namely, that they may "know the Scriptures from their childhood," and have stored their minds with their laws, and doctrines, and promises, as their guide in future life; a work which will require, at least, as much attention from the Christian as from the Jewish parent, who was commanded on this wise,—  
"Thou shalt teach them diligently to thy children, and thou shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up."  
The practice of the Jews in this respect, appears to have been adopted by the Christians of the primitive Churches, which were composed of both Jewish and Gentile converts in almost every place; and from them it is probable that the early customs of teaching children to commit portions of Scripture to memory, to repeat prayers night and morning, and to approach their parents for their blessing, might be derived. The last pleasing and impressive form, which contains a recognition of the domestic Priesthood, as inherent in the head of any family, has

in this country grown of late into disuse, which is much to be regretted.

It is also essential to the proper discharge of the parental duty of instructing children, that every means should be used to render what is taught influential upon the heart and conduct. It is, therefore, solemnly imperative upon parents to be "holy in all manner of conversation, and godliness," and thus to enforce truth by example. It concerns them, as much as Ministers, to be anxious for the success of their labours; and recognising the same principle, that "God giveth the increase," to be abundant in prayers for the gift of the Holy Spirit to their children. Both as a means of grace, and in recognition of God's covenant of mercy with them and their seed after them, it behoves them also to bring their children to baptism in their infancy; to explain to them the baptismal covenant when they are able to understand it; and to habituate them from early years to the observance of the Sabbath, and to regular attendance on the public worship of God.

The GOVERNMENT of children, is another great branch of parental duty, in which both the parents are bound cordially to unite. Like all other kinds of government appointed by God, the end is the good of those subject to it; and it therefore excludes all caprice, vexation, and tyranny. In the case of parents, it is eminently a government of LOVE, and therefore, although it includes strictness, it necessarily excludes severity. The mild and benevolent character of our Divine religion displays itself here, as in every other instance where the heat of temper, the possession of power, or the ebullitions of passion, might be turned against the weak and unprotected. The civil laws of those countries in which Christianity was first promulgated, gave great power to parents over their children, (5) which, in the unfeeling spirit of Paganism, was often harshly, and even cruelly, used. On the contrary, St. Paul enjoins, "And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath," meaning plainly, by a rigorous severity, an overbearing and tyrannical behaviour, tending to exasperate angry passions in them. So again, "Fathers, provoke not your children, lest they be discouraged," discouraged from all attempts at pleasing, as regarding it an impossible task, "and be unfitted to pass through the world with advantage, when their spirits have been unreasonably broken under an oppressive yoke, in the earliest years of their life." (6) But though the parental government is founded upon kindness, and can never be separated from it, when rightly understood and exercised, it is

(5) By the old Roman law, the father had the power of life and death, as to his children.

(6) DODDRIDGE *On Colossians* iii, 21.



still government, and is a trust committed by God to the parent, which must be faithfully discharged. Corporal correction is not *only* allowed, but is made a duty in Scripture, where other means would be ineffectual. Yet it may be laid down as a certain principle, that, where the authority of a parent is exercised with constancy and discretion, and enforced by gravity, kindness, and character, this will seldom be found necessary; nor, when the steady resolution of the parent to inflict it when it is demanded by the case, is once known to the child, will it need often to be repeated. Parental government is also concerned in forming the manners of children; in inculcating civility, order, cleanliness, industry, and economy; in repressing extravagant desires and gratifications in dress and amusements; and in habituating the will to a ready submission to authority. It must be so supreme, whatever the age of children may be, as to control the whole order and habits of the family, and to exclude all licentiousness, riot, and unbecoming amusements from the house, lest the curse of Eli should fall upon those who imitate his example in not reproving evil with sufficient earnestness, and not restraining it by the effectual exercise of authority.

Another duty of parents is the comfortable settlement of their children in the world, as far as their ability extends. This includes the discreet choosing of a calling, by which their children may “provide things honest in the sight of all men;” taking especial care, however, that their moral safety shall be consulted in the choice,—a consideration which too many disregard, under the influence of carelessness, or a vain ambition. The “laying up for children” is also sanctioned both by nature, and by our religion; but this is not so to be understood as that the comforts of a parent, according to his rank in life, should be abridged; nor that it should interfere with those charities which Christianity has made his personal duty.

The next of these reciprocal duties, are those of **SERVANT** and **MASTER**.

This is a relation which will continue to the end of time. Equality of condition is alike contrary to the nature of things, and to the appointment of God. Some must toil, and others direct; some command, and others obey; nor is this order contrary to the real interest of the multitude, as at first sight it might appear. The acquisition of wealth by a few affords more abundant employment to the many; and in a well ordered, thriving, and industrious State, except in seasons of peculiar distress, it is evident, that the comforts of the lower classes are greater than could be

attained were the land equally divided among them, and so left to their own cultivation that no one should be the servant of another. To preserve such a state of things would be impossible ; and could it be done, no arts but of the rudest kind, no manufactures, and no commerce, could exist. The very first attempt to introduce these would necessarily create the two classes of workmen and employers ; of the many who labour with the hands, and the few who labour with the mind, in directing the operations ; and thus the equality would be destroyed.

It is not, however, to be denied, that through the bad principles and violent passions of man, the relations of servant and master have been a source of great evil and misery. The more, therefore, is that religion to be valued, which, since these relations must exist, restrains the evil that is incident to them, and shows how they may be made sources of mutual benevolence and happiness. Wherever the practical influence of religion has not been felt, servants have generally been more or less treated with contempt, contumely, harshness, and oppression. They, on the contrary, are, from their natural corruption, inclined to resent authority, to indulge selfishness, and to commit fraud, either by withholding the just quantum of labour, or by direct theft. From the conflict of these evils in servants and in masters, too often result suspicion, cunning, over-reaching, malignant passions, contemptuous and irritating speeches, the loss of principle in the servant, and of kind and equitable feeling on the part of the master.

The direct manner in which the precepts of the New Testament tend to remedy these evils, cannot but be remarked. Government in masters, as well as in fathers, is an appointment of God, though differing in circumstances ; and it is, therefore, to be honoured. "Let as many servants as are under the yoke, count their own masters worthy of all *honour* ;" a direction which enjoins both respectful thoughts, and humility and propriety of external demeanour towards them. *Obedience* to their commands in all things lawful is next enforced ; which obedience is to be grounded on principle and conscience ; on "singleness of heart, as unto Christ ;" thus serving a master with the same sincerity, the same desire to do the appointed work well, as is required of us by Christ. This service is also to be *cheerful*, and not wrung out merely by a sense of duty : "Not with eye service, as men pleasers ;" not having respect simply to the approbation of the master, but "as the servants of Christ," making profession of his religion, "doing the will of God," in this branch of duty, "from the *heart*," with alacrity and good feeling. The duties of servants, stated in these brief precepts, might

easily be shown to comprehend every particular which can be justly required of persons in this station ; and the whole is enforced by a sanction which could have no place but in a revelation from God,—“knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free,” Eph. vi, 5. In other words, even the common duties of servants, when faithfully, cheerfully, and piously performed, are by Christianity made rewardable actions : “Of the Lord ye shall receive a reward.”

The duties of servants and masters are, however, strictly reciprocal. Hence the Apostle continues his injunctions as to the right discharge of these relations, by saying, immediately after he had prescribed the conduct of servants, “And ye, masters, do *the same things* unto them;” that is, act towards them upon the same equitable, conscientious, and benevolent principles, as you exact from them. He then grounds his rules, as to masters, upon the great and influential principle, “Knowing that your Master is in heaven;” that you are under authority, and are accountable to him for your conduct to your servants. Thus masters are put under the eye of God, who not only maintains their authority, when properly exercised, by making their servants accountable for any contempt of it, and for every other failure of duty, but also holds the master himself responsible for its just and mild exercise. A solemn and religious aspect is thus at once given to a relation, which by many is considered as one merely of interest. When the Apostle enjoins it on masters to “forbear threatening,” he inculcates the treatment of servants with kindness of manner, with humanity, and good nature ; and, by consequence also, the cultivation of that benevolent feeling towards persons in this condition, which in all rightly influenced minds, will flow from the consideration of their equality with themselves in the sight of God ; their equal share in the benefits of redemption ; their relation to us as brethren in Christ, if they are “partakers of like precious faith;” and their title to the common inheritance of heaven, where all those temporary distinctions on which human vanity is so apt to fasten, shall be done away. There will also not be wanting in such minds, a consideration of the service rendered ; (for the benefit is mutual ;) and a feeling of gratitude for service faithfully performed, although it is compensated by wages or hire.

To benevolent sentiment the Apostle, however, adds the principles of justice and equity : “Masters, give to your servants that which is *just* and *equal*, knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven,” who is the avenger of injustice. The terms *just* and *equal*,



though terms of near affinity, have a somewhat different signification. To give that which is *just* to a servant, is to deal with him according to an agreement made; but to give him what is *equal*, is to deal fairly and honestly with him, and to return what is his due in reason and conscience, even when there are circumstances in the case which strict law would not oblige us to take into the account. "Justice makes our *contracts* the measure of our dealings with others, and equity our *consciences*." (7) Equity here may also have respect particularly to that important rule which obliges us to do to others what we would, in the same circumstances, have them to do to us. This rule of equity has a large range in the treatment of servants. It excludes all arbitrary and tyrannical government; it teaches masters to respect the strength and capacity of their servants; it represses rage and passion, contumely and insult; and it directs that their labour shall not be so extended as not to leave proper time for rest, for attendance on God's worship, and, at proper seasons, for recreation.

The *religious* duties of masters are also of great importance.

Under the Old Testament the servants of a house partook of the common benefit of the true religion, as appears from the case of the servants of Abraham, who were all brought into the covenant of circumcision; and from the early prohibition of idolatrous practices in families, and, consequently, the maintenance of the common worship of God. The same consecration of whole families to God we see in the New Testament; in the baptism of "houses," and the existence of domestic Churches. The practice of inculcating the true religion upon servants, passed from the Jews to the first Christians, and followed indeed from the conscientious employment of the master's *influence* in favour of piety; a point to which we shall again advert.

From all this arises the duty of instructing servants in the principles of religion; of teaching them to read, and furnishing them with the Scriptures; of having them present at family worship; and of conversing with them faithfully and affectionately respecting their best interests. In particular, it is to be observed, that servants have by the law of God a right to the Sabbath, of which no master can, without sin, deprive them. They are entitled under that law to rest on that day; and that not only for the recreation of their strength and spirits, but, especially, to enable them to attend public worship, and to read the Scriptures, and pray in private. Against this duty all those offend who employ servants in works of gain; and also those who do not so arrange the affairs

of their households, that domestic servants may be as little occupied as possible with the affairs of the house, in order that they may be able religiously to use a day which is made as much theirs as their masters', by the express letter of the law of God; nor can the blessing of God be expected to rest upon families where this shocking indifference to the religious interests of domestics, and this open disregard of the Divine command, prevail. A Jewish strictness in some particulars is not bound upon Christians: as for example, the prohibition against lighting fires. These were parts of the municipal, not the moral law of the Jews; and they have respect to a people living in a certain climate, and in peculiar circumstances. But even these prohibitions are of use as teaching us self denial, and that in all cases we ought to keep within the rules of necessity. Unnecessary occupations are clearly forbidden even when they do not come under the description of *work* for gain; and when they are avoided, there will be sufficient leisure for every part of a family to enjoy the Sabbath as a day of rest, and as a day of undistracted devotion. We may here also advert to that heavy national offence which still hangs upon us, the denying to the great majority of our bond slaves in the West Indies, those Sabbath rights which are secured to them by the very religion we profess. Neither as a day of *rest*, nor as a day of *worship*, is this sacred day granted to them; and for this our insolent and contemptuous defiance of God's holy law, we must be held accountable. This is a consideration which ought to induce that part of the community who retain any fear of God, to be unwearied in their applications to the legislature until this great reproach, this weight of offence against religion and humanity, shall be taken away from us.

The employment of *influence* for the religious benefit of servants, forms another part of the duty of every Christian master. This appears to be obligatory upon the general principle, that every thing which can be used by us to promote the will of God, and to benefit others, is a "talent" committed to us, which we are required by our Lord to "occupy." It is greatly to be feared, that this duty is much neglected among professedly religious masters; that even domestic servants are suffered to live in a state of spiritual danger, without any means being regularly and affectionately used to bring them to the practical knowledge of the truth; means which, if used with judgment and perseverance, and enforced by the natural influence of a superior, might prove in many instances both corrective and saving. But if this duty be much neglected in households, it is much more disregarded as to that class of servants who are employed as day labourers by the farmer, as journeymen by the

master artisan, and as workmen by the manufacturer. More or less the master comes into immediate connexion with this class of servants; and although they are not so directly under his control as those of his household, nor within reach of the same instruction, yet is he bound to discountenance vice among them; to recommend their attendance on public worship; to see that their children are sent to schools; to provide religious help for them when sick; to prefer sober and religious men to others; and to pay them their wages in due time for market, and so early on the Saturday, or on the Friday, that their families may not be obstructed in their preparations for attending the house of God on the Lord's day morning. If the religious character and bias of the master were thus *felt* by his whole establishment, and a due regard paid uniformly to justice and benevolence in the treatment of all in his employ, not only would great moral good be the result, but there would be reason to hope that the relation between employers and their workmen, which, in consequence of frequent disputes respecting wages and combinations, has been rendered suspicious and vexatious, would assume a character of mutual confidence and reciprocal good will.

POLITICAL JUSTICE respects chiefly the relation of *Subject* and *Sovereign*, a delicate branch of morals in a religious system introduced into the world under such circumstances as Christianity, and which in its wisdom it has resolved into general principles of easy application, in ordinary circumstances. With equal wisdom it has left extraordinary emergencies unprovided for by special directions; though even in such cases the path of duty is not without light reflected upon it from the whole genius and spirit of the institution.

On the origin of power, and other questions of government, endless controversies have been held, and very different theories adopted, which, so happily is the world exchanging government by force for government by public opinion, have now lost much of their interest, and require not, therefore, a particular examination.

On this branch of morals, as on the others we have already considered, the Scriptures throw a light peculiar to themselves; and the theory of government which they contain will be found perfectly accordant with the experience of the present and best age of the world as to practical government, and exhibits a perfect harmony with that still more improved civil condition which it must ultimately assume in consequence of the diffusion of knowledge, freedom, and virtue.

The leading doctrine of Scripture is, that government is an



ordinance of God. It was manifestly his will that men should live in society; this cannot be doubted. The very laws he has given to men prescribing their relative duties, assume the permanent existence of social relations, and therefore place them under regulation. From this fact the Divine appointment of government flows as a necessary consequence. A society cannot exist without rules or laws; and it therefore follows that such laws must be upheld by enforcement. Hence an *executive* power in some form must arise, to guard, to judge, to reward, to punish. For if there were no executors of laws, the laws would become a dead letter, which would be the same thing as having none at all; and where there are no laws, there can be no society. But we are not left to inference. In the first ages of the world government was paternal, and the power of government was vested in parents by the express appointment of God. Among the Jews, rulers, judges, kings, were also appointed by God himself; and as for all other nations, the New Testament expressly declares, that "the powers which be are ordained of God."

The origin of power is not, therefore, from man, but from God. It is not left as a matter of choice to men, whether they will submit to be governed or not; it is God's appointment that they should be subject to those powers whom he, in his government of the world, has placed over them, in all things for which he has instituted government, that is, that it should be "a terror to evil doers, and a praise to them that do well." Nor are they at liberty "to resist the power," when employed in accomplishing such legitimate ends of government; nor to deny the right, nor to refuse the means, even when they have the power to do so, by which the supreme power may restrain evil, and enforce truth, righteousness, and peace. Every supreme power, we may therefore conclude, is invested with full and unalienable authority to govern well; and the people of every state are bound, by the institution of God, cheerfully and thankfully to submit to be so governed.

There can, therefore, be no such compact between any parties as shall originate the right of government, or the duty of being governed; nor can any compact annul, in the least, the rightful authority of the supreme power to govern efficiently for the full accomplishment of the ends for which government was divinely appointed; nor can it place any limit upon the duty of subjects to be governed accordingly.

We may conclude, therefore, with Paley and others, that what is called "the social compact," the theory of Locke and his fol-

lowers on government, is a pure fiction. In point of fact, men never did originate government by mutual agreement; and men are all born under some government, and become its subjects, without having any terms of compact proposed to them, or giving any consent to understood terms, or being conscious at all that their assent is necessary to convey the right to govern them, or to impose upon themselves the obligation of subjection. The absurdities which Paley has pointed out as necessarily following from the theory of the social compact, appear to be sufficiently well founded; but the fatal objection is, that it makes government a mere creation of man, whereas Scripture makes it an ordinance of God: it supposes no obligation anterior to human consent; whereas the appointment of God constitutes the obligation, and is wholly independent of human choice and arrangement.

The matter of government, however, does not appear to be left so loose as it is represented by the author of the *Moral and Political Philosophy*.

The ground of the subject's obligation which he assigns is, "the will of God as collected from expediency." We prefer to assign the will of God as announced in the public law of the Scriptures; and which manifestly establishes two points as general rules: 1. The positive obligation of men to submit to government: 2. Their obligation to yield obedience, in all things lawful, to the governments under which they live, as appointed by God in the order of his providence,—“the powers that be,” the powers which actually exist, “are ordained of God.” From these two principles it will follow, that in the case of any number of men and women being thrown together in some desert part of the world, it would be their duty to marry, to institute paternal government in their families, and to submit to a common government, in obedience to the declared will of God: and in the case of persons born under any established government, that they are required to yield submission to it as an ordinance of God, “a power” already appointed, and under which they are placed in the order of Divine providence.

Evident, however, as these principles are, they can never be pleaded in favour of oppression and wrong; since it is always to be remembered that the same Scriptures which establish these principles have set a sufficient number of guards and limits about them, and that the rights and duties of sovereign and subject are reciprocal. The manner in which they are made to harmonize with public interest and liberty will appear after these reciprocal duties and rights are explained.

The duties of the sovereign power, whatever its form may be, are, the enactment of just and equal laws ; the impartial execution of those laws in mercy ; the encouragement of religion, morality, learning, and industry ; the protection and sustenance of the poor and helpless ; the maintenance of domestic peace, and, as far as the interests of the community will allow, of peace with all nations ; the faithful observance of all treaties ; an incessant application to the cares of government, without exacting more tribute from the people than is necessary for the real wants of the State, and the honourable maintenance of its officers ; the appointment of inferior magistrates of probity and fitness, with a diligent and strict oversight of them ; and finally, the making provision for the continued instruction of the people in the religion of the Scriptures which it professes to receive as a revelation from God, and that with such a respect to the rights of conscience, as shall leave all men free to discharge their duties to Him who is "higher than the highest."

All these obligations are either plainly expressed, or are to be inferred from such passages as the following : "The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me, He that ruleth over men must be *just*, ruling in the fear of God ; and he shall be as the light of the morning when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds, as the tender grass springeth out of the earth by clear shining after rain ;" images which join to the attribute of justice a constant and diffusive beneficence. "Mercy and truth preserve the king." "Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment ; thou shalt not respect the person of the poor, nor honour the person of the mighty ; but in righteousness thou shalt judge." "He that saith unto the wicked, Thou art righteous," that is, acquits the guilty in judgment, "him shall the people curse, nations shall abhor him." "Moreover thou shalt provide out of all the people able men ; such as fear God ; men of truth, hating covetousness ; and place such over them, and let them judge the people at all seasons." "Him that hath a high look and a proud heart I will not suffer. Mine eyes shall be upon the faithful in the land, that they may dwell with me ; he that walketh in a perfect way, he shall serve me. He that worketh deceit shall not dwell in my house, he that telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight." To these and many similar passages in the Old Testament may be added, as so many intimations of the *Divine will* as to rulers, those patriotic and pious practices of such of the judges and kings of Israel as had the express approbation of God ; for although they may not apply as particular rules in all cases, they



have to all succeeding ages the force of the general principles which are implied in them. The New Testament directions, although expressed generally, are equally comprehensive; and it is worthy of remark, that whilst they assert the Divine ordination of "the powers that be," they explicitly mark out for what *ends* they were thus appointed, and allow, therefore, of no plea of divine right in rulers for any thing contrary to them. "Render unto Cesar the things that are Cesar's," that is, things which are Cesar's by public law and customary impost. "For rulers are not a terror to *good works*, but to *the evil*. Wilt thou not be afraid of the power? Do that which is *good*, and thou shalt have *praise* of the same; for he is the minister of God to thee *for good*. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain; for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath *upon him that doeth evil*." "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man, for the Lord's sake; whether it be to the king, as supreme, or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of *evil doers*, and for the praise of them that *do well*."

In these passages, which state the legitimate ends of government, and limit God's ordination of government to them, the duties of subjects are partially anticipated; but they are capable of a fuller enumeration.

*Subjection and Obedience* are the first; qualified, however, as we know from the example of the Apostles, with exceptions as to what is contrary to conscience and morality. In such cases they obeyed not, but suffered rather. Otherwise the rule is, "Let every soul be subject to the higher powers;" and that not merely "for wrath," fear of punishment, but "for conscience' sake," from a conviction that it is right. "For this cause pay ye *tribute* also; for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. Render, therefore, to all their dues, tribute to whom tribute is due, custom to whom custom, fear to whom fear, honour to whom honour."—Supplies for the necessities of government are therefore to be willingly and faithfully furnished. Rulers are also to be treated with *respect* and *reverence*: "Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people." They are to be honoured both by external marks of respect, and by being maintained in dignity; their actions are to be judged of with candour and charity, and when questioned or blamed, this is to be done with moderation, and not with invective or ridicule, a mode of "speaking evil of dignities," which grossly offends against the Christian rule. This branch of our duties is greatly strengthened by the enjoined duty of praying

for rulers, a circumstance which gives an efficacy to it which no uninspired system can furnish. "I exhort, therefore, that first of all supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty; for this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour." This holy and salutary practice is founded upon a recognition of the ordinance of God as to government; it recognises, also, the existing powers in every place, as God's "ministers;" it supposes that all public affairs are under Divine control; it reminds men of the arduous duties and responsibility of governors; it promotes a benevolent, grateful, and respectful feeling towards them; and it is a powerful guard against the factious and seditious spirit. These are so evidently the principles and tendencies of this sacred custom, that when prayer has been used, as it sometimes has, to convey the feelings of a malignant, factious, or light spirit, every well disposed mind must have been shocked at so profane a mockery, and must have felt that such prayers "for all that are in authority," were any thing but "good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour."

Connected as these reciprocal rights and duties of rulers, and of their subjects, are with the peace, order, liberty, and welfare of society, so that were they universally acted upon, nothing would remain to be desired for the promotion of its peace and welfare; it is also evident that in no part of the world have they been fully observed, and, indeed, in most countries they are, to this day, grossly trampled upon. A question then arises, How far does it consist with Christian submission to endeavour to remedy the evils of a government?

On this difficult and often controverted point we must proceed with caution, and with steady respect to the principles above drawn from the word of God; and that the subject may be less entangled, it may be proper to leave out of our consideration, for the present, all questions relating to rival supreme powers, as in the case of a usurpation, and those which respect the duty of subjects, when persecuted by their government on account of their religion.

Although government is enjoined by God, it appears to be left to men to judge in what form its purposes may, in certain circumstances, be most effectually accomplished. No direction is given on this subject in the Scriptures. The patriarchal or family governments of the most ancient times, were founded upon nature; but when two or more families were joined under one head, either for

mutual defence, or for aggression, the [government] was one of choice, or it resulted from a submission effected by conquest. Here, in many cases, a *compact* might, and in some instances did, come in, though differing in principle from "the social compact" of theoretical writers; and this affords the only rational way of interpreting that real social compact which in some degree or other exists in all nations. In all cases where the patriarchal government was to be raised into a government common to many families, some considerable number of persons must have determined its form, and they would have the right to place it upon such fundamental principles as might seem best, provided that such principles did not interfere with the duties made obligatory by God upon every sovereign power, and with the obligations of the subject to be governed by justice in mercy, and to be controlled from injuring others. Equally clear would be the right of the community, either *en masse*, or by their natural heads or representatives, to agree upon a body of laws, which should be the standing and published expression of the will of the supreme power, that so the sovereign will on all main questions might not be subject to constant changes and the caprice of an individual; and to oblige the sovereign, as the condition of his office, to bind himself to observe these fundamental principles and laws of the State by solemn oath, which has been the practice among many nations, and especially those of the Gothic stock. It follows from hence, that whilst there is an ordination of God as to government, prior to the establishment of all governments, there is no ordination of a particular man or men to govern, nor any investment of families with hereditary right. There is no such ordination in Scripture, and we know that none takes place by particular revelation. God "setteth up one, and putteth down another," in virtue of his dominion over all things; but he does this through men themselves, as his controlled and often unconscious instruments. Hence, by St. Peter, in perfect consistency with St. Paul, the existing governments of the world are called "ordinances of men."—"Submit to every ordinance of man," or to every human creation or constitution, "for the Lord's sake, whether to the king as supreme," &c. Again, as the wisdom to govern with absolute truth and justice, is not to be presumed to dwell in one man, however virtuous, so, in this state of things, the better to secure a salutary administration, there would be a right to make provision for this also, by Councils, Senates, Parliaments, Cortes, or similar institutions, vested with suitable powers, to forward, but not to obstruct, the exercise of good government. And accordingly, we can trace the rudiments of these institutions in the



earliest stages of most regular governments. These and similar arrangements, are left to human care, prudence, and patriotism ; and they are in perfect accordance with the principles of sovereign right as laid down in Scripture.

It is not, however, in the forming of a new State, that any great difficulty in morals arises. It comes in when either old States, originally ill constituted, become inadapted to the purposes of good government in a new and altered condition of society, and the supreme power refuses to adapt itself to this new state of affairs ; or when, in States originally well constituted, encroachments upon the public liberties take place, and great misrule or neglect is chargeable upon the executive. The question in such cases is, whether resistance to the will of the supreme power is consistent with the subjects' duty ?

To answer this, resistance must be divided into two kinds,—*the resistance of opinion*, and *the resistance of force*.

As to the first, the lawfulness, nay, even the duty of it must often be allowed ; but under certain qualifying circumstances. As, 1. That this resistance of opposing and inculpating opinion is not directed against government, as such, however strict, provided it be just and impartial. 2. That it is not personal against the supreme magistrate himself, or his delegated authorities, but relates to public acts only. 3. That it springs not from mere theoretical preference of some new form of government to that actually existing, so that it has in it nothing practical. 4. That it proceeds not from a hasty, prejudiced, or malignant interpretation of the character, designs, and acts of a government. 5. That it is not factious ; that is, not the result of attachment to parties, and of zeal to effect mere party objects, instead of the general good. 6. That it does not respect the interests of a few only, or of a part of the community, or the mere local interests of some places in opposition to the just interests of other places. Under such guards as these, the respectful, but firm expression of opinion, by speech, writing, petition, or remonstrance, is not only lawful, but is often an imperative duty, a duty for which hazards even must be run by those who endeavour to lead up public opinion to place itself against real encroachments upon the fundamental laws of a State, or any serious maleadministration of its affairs. The same conclusion may be maintained under similar reserves, when the object is to improve a deficient and inadequate state of the supreme government. It is indeed specially requisite here, that the case should be a clear one ; that it should be felt to be so by the great mass of those who with any propriety can be called *the public* ; that it

should not be urged beyond the necessity of the case ; that the discussion of it should be temperate ; that the change should be directly connected with an obvious public good, not otherwise to be accomplished. When these circumstances meet, there is manifestly no opposition to government as an ordinance of God ; no blamable resistance “to the powers that be,” since it is only proposed to place them in circumstances the more effectually to fulfil the duties of their office ; nothing contrary, in fact, to the original compact, the object of which was the public benefit, by rendering its government as efficient to promote the good of the State as possible, and which therefore necessarily supposed a liability to future modifications, when the fairly collected public sentiment, through the organs by which it usually expresses itself as to the public weal, required it. The least equivocal time, however, for proposing any change in what might be regarded as fundamental or constitutional in a form of government originally ill settled, would be on the demise of the sovereign, when the new stipulations might be offered to his successor, and very lawfully be imposed upon him.

Resistance by *force* may be divided into two kinds. The first is that milder one which belongs to constitutional states, that is, to those in which the compact between the supreme power and the people has been drawn out into express articles, or is found in well understood and received principles and ancient customs, imposing checks upon the sovereign will, and surrounding with guards the public liberty. The application of this controlling power, which, in this country, is placed in a Parliament, may have in it much of compulsion and force ; as when Parliament rejects measures proposed by the ministry, who are the organs of the will of the sovereign ; or when it refuses the usual supplies for the army and navy, until grievances are redressed. The proper or improper use of this power depends on the circumstances ; but when not employed factiously, nor under the influence of private feelings, nor in subservience to unjustifiable popular clamour, or to popular demagogues ; but advisedly and patriotically, in order to maintain the laws and customs of the kingdom, there is in it no infringement of the laws of Scripture as to the subjects’ obedience. A compact exists ; these are the established means of enforcing it ; and to them the sovereign has consented in his coronation oath.

The second kind is resistance *by force of arms* ; and this at least must be established before its lawfulness, in any case, however extreme, can be proved, that it is so necessary to remedy some great public evil that milder means are totally inadequate,—a point

which can very seldom be made out so clearly as to satisfy conscientious men. One of three cases must be supposed:—either that the nation enjoys good institutions which it is enlightened enough to value:—or that public liberty and other civil blessings are in gradual progress; but that a part only of the people are interested in maintaining and advancing them, whilst a great body of ignorant, prejudiced, and corrupt persons, are on the side of the supreme power, and ready to lend themselves as instruments of its misrule and despotism:—or, thirdly, that although the majority of the public are opposed to infringements on the constitution, yet the sovereign, in attempting to change the fundamental principles of his compact, employs his mercenary troops against his subjects, or is aided and abetted by some foreign influence or power.

In the first case we have supposed, it does not seem possible for unjust aggressions to be successful. The people are enlightened, and attached to their institutions; and a prompt resistance of public opinion to the very first attempt of the supreme power must, in that case, be excited, and will be sufficient to arrest the evil. Accordingly, we find no instance of such a people being bereft of their liberty by their rulers. The danger in that state of society often lies on the other side. For as there is a natural inclination in men in power to extend their authority, so in subjects there is a strong disposition to resist or evade it; and when the strength of public opinion is known in any country, there are never wanting persons, who, from vanity, faction, or interest, are ready to excite the passions, and to corrupt the feelings of the populace, and to render them suspicious and unruly; so that the difficulty which a true patriotism will often have to contend with, is, not to repress but to support a just authority. Licentiousness in the people has often, by a reaction, destroyed liberty, overthrowing the powers by which alone it is supported.

The second case supposes just opinions and feelings on the necessity of improving the civil institutions of a country to be in some progress; that the evils of bad government are not only beginning to be felt, but to be extensively reflected upon; and that the circumstances of a country are such that these considerations must force themselves upon the public mind, and advance the influence of public opinion in favour of beneficial changes. When this is the case, the existing evils must be gradually counteracted, and ultimately subdued by the natural operation of all these circumstances. But if little impression has been made upon the public mind, resistance would be hopeless, and, even if not



condemned by a higher principle, impolitic. The elements of society are not capable of being formed into a better system, or, if formed into it, cannot sustain it, since no form of government, however good in theory, is reducible to beneficial practice, without a considerable degree of public intelligence and public virtue. Even where society is partially prepared for beneficial changes, they may be hurried on too rapidly, that is, before sufficient previous impression has been made upon the public mind and character, and then nothing but mischief could result from a contest of force with a bad government. The effect would be that the leaders of each party would appeal to an ignorant and bad populace, and the issue on either side would prove injurious to the advancement of civil improvement. If the despotic party should triumph, then, of course, all patriotism would be confounded with rebellion, and the efforts of moderate men to benefit their country be rendered for a long time hopeless. If the party seeking just reforms should triumph, they could only do so by the aid of those whose bad passions they had inflamed, as was the case in the French Revolution; and then the result would be a violence which, it is true, overthrows one form of tyranny, but sets up another under which the best men perish. It cannot be doubted but that the sound public opinion in France, independent of all the theories in favour of republicanism which had been circulated among a people previously unprepared for political discussions, was sufficient to have effected, gradually, the most beneficial changes in its government; and that the violence which was excited by blind passions threw back the real liberties of that country for many years. The same effect followed the parliamentary war, excited in our own country in the reign of Charles the First. The resistance of arms was in neither case to be justified, and it led to the worst crimes. The extreme case of necessity was not made out in either instance; and the duty of subjects to their sovereigns was grossly violated.

The third case supposed appears to be the only one in which the renunciation of allegiance is clearly justifiable; because when the contract of a king with his people is not only violated obviously, repeatedly, and in opposition to petition and remonstrance, but a mercenary soldiery is employed against those whom he is bound to protect, and the fear of foreign force and compulsion is also suspended over them to compel the surrender of those rights which are accorded to them both by the laws of God, and the fundamental laws of the kingdom, the resistance of public feeling and sentiment, and that of the constitutional authorities, is no

longer available ; and such a sovereign does, in fact, lose his rights by a hostile denial of his duties, in opposition to his contract with his people. Such a case arose in this country at the Revolution of 1688 ; it was one so clear and indubitable, as to carry with it the calm and deliberate sense of the vast majority of all ranks of society ; and the whole was stamped with the character of a deliberate national act, not that of a faction. This resistance was doubtless justifiable. It involved no opposition to government as such, but was made for the purpose of serving the ends of good government, and the preservation of the very principles of the constitution. Nor did it imply any resistance to the existing power in any respect in which it was invested with any right, either by the laws of God, or those of the realm. It will, however, appear that here was a concurrence of circumstances which rendered the case one which can very rarely occur. It was not the act of a few individuals ; nor of mere theorists in forms of government ; nor was it the result of unfounded jealousy or alarm ; nor was it the work of either the populace on the one hand, or of an aristocratic faction on the other ; but of the people under their natural guides and leaders,—the nobility and gentry of the land : nor were any private interests involved, the sole object being the public weal, and the maintenance of the laws. When such circumstances and principles meet, similar acts may be justified ; but in no instance of an equivocal character.

The question of a subject's duty in case of the existence of rival supreme powers, is generally a very difficult one, at least for some time. When the question of *right* which lies between them divides a nation, he who follows his conscientious opinion as to this point is doubtless morally safe, and he ought to follow it at the expense of any inconvenience. But when a power is settled *de facto* in the possession of the government, although the right of its claim should remain questionable in the minds of any, there appears a limit beyond which no man can be fairly required to withhold his full allegiance. Where that limit lies it is difficult to say, and individual conscience must have considerable latitude ; but perhaps the general rule may be, that when continued resistance would be manifestly contrary to the general welfare of the whole, it is safe to conclude that He who changes the "powers that be" at his sovereign pleasure, has in his providence permitted or established a new order of things to which men are bound to conform.

Whether men are at liberty to resist their lawful princes when persecuted by them for conscience' sake, is a question which brings in additional considerations ; because of that patience and

meekness which Christ has enjoined upon his followers when they suffer for his religion. When persecution falls upon a portion only of the subjects of a country, it appears their clear duty to submit, rather than to engage in plots and conspiracies against the persecuting power; practices which never can consist with Christian moderation and truth. But when it should fall upon a people constituting a distinct State, though united politically with some other, as in the case of the Waldenses, then the persecution, if carried to the violation of liberty, life, and property, would involve the violation of political rights also, and so nullify the compact which has guaranteed protection to all innocent subjects. A *national* resistance on these grounds would, for the foregoing reasons, stand on a very different basis.

No questions of this kind can come before a Christian man, however, without placing him under the necessity of considering the obligation of many duties of a much clearer character than, in almost any case, the duty of resistance to the government under which he lives, can be. He is bound to avoid all intemperance and uncharitableness, and he is not, therefore, at liberty to become a factious man; he is forbidden to indulge malignity, and is restrained therefore from revenge; he is taught to be distrustful of his own judgment, and must only admit that of the wise and good to be influential with him; he must therefore avoid all association with low and violent men, the rabble of a State, and their designing leaders; he is bound to submission to rulers in all cases where a *superior duty* cannot be fairly established; and he is warned of the danger of resistance "to the power," as bringing after it Divine "condemnation," wherever the case is not clear, and not fully within the principles of the word of God. So circumstanced, the allegiance of a Christian people is secured to all governors, and to all governments, except in very extreme cases which can very seldom arise in the judgment of any who respect the authority of the word of God; and thus this branch of Christian morality is established upon principles which at once uphold the majesty of [government,] and throw their shield over the liberties of the people; principles which in the wisdom of God beautifully entwine [fidelity,] freedom, and peace.



## PART FOURTH.

### THE INSTITUTIONS OF CHRISTIANITY.

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#### CHAPTER I.

#### THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

THE Church of Christ, in its largest sense, consists of all who have been baptized in the name of Christ, and who thereby make a visible profession of faith in his Divine mission, and in all the doctrines taught by him and his inspired Apostles. In a stricter sense, it consists of those who are vitally united to Christ, as the members of the body to the head, and who, being thus imbued with spiritual life, walk no longer "after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Taken in either view, it is a visible society, bound to observe the laws of Christ, its sole Head and Lord. Visible fellowship with this Church is the duty of all who profess faith in Christ; for in this, in part, consists that "confession of Christ before men," on which so much stress is laid in the discourses of our Lord. It is obligatory on all who are convinced of the truth of Christianity to be baptized; and upon all thus baptized frequently to partake of the Lord's Supper, in order to testify their continued faith in that great and distinguishing doctrine of the religion of Christ, the redemption of the world by the sacrificial effusion of his blood, both of which suppose union with his Church. The ends of this fellowship or association are, to proclaim our faith in the doctrine of Christ as divine in its origin, and necessary to salvation; to offer public prayers and thanksgivings to God through Christ, as the sole Mediator; to hear God's word explained and enforced; and to place ourselves under that discipline which consists in the enforcement of the laws of Christ, (which are the rules of the society called the Church,) upon the members, not merely by general exhortation, but by kind oversight, and personal injunction and admonition of its Ministers. All these

flow from the original obligation to avow our faith in Christ, and our love to him.

The Church of Christ being then a visible and permanent society, bound to observe certain rites, and to obey certain rules, the existence of government in it is necessarily supposed. All religious rites suppose ORDER, all order DIRECTION AND CONTROL, and these a DIRECTIVE AND CONTROLLING POWER. Again, all laws are nugatory without enforcement, in the present mixed and imperfect state of society; and all enforcement supposes an EXECUTIVE. If Baptism be the door of admission into the Church, some must judge of the fitness of candidates, and administrators of the rite must be appointed; if the Lord's Supper must be partaken of, the times and the mode are to be determined, the qualifications of communicants judged of, and the administration placed in suitable hands; if worship must be social and public, here again there must be an appointment of times, an order, and an administration; if the word of God is to be read and preached, then readers and preachers are necessary; if the continuance of any one in the fellowship of Christians be conditional upon good conduct, so that the purity and credit of the Church may be guarded, then the power of enforcing discipline must be lodged somewhere. Thus government flows necessarily from the very nature of the institution of the Christian Church; and since this institution has the authority of Christ and his Apostles, it is not to be supposed that its government was left unprovided for; and if they have in fact made such a provision, it is no more a matter of mere option with Christians whether they will be subject to government in the Church, than it is optional with them to confess Christ by becoming its members.

The *Nature* of this government, and the *Persons* to whom it is committed, are both points which we must briefly examine by the light of the Holy Scriptures.

As to the first, it is wholly *spiritual*:—"My kingdom," says our Lord, "is not of this world." The Church is a society founded upon faith, and united by mutual love, for the personal edification of its members in holiness, and for the religious benefit of the world. The nature of its government is thus determined;—it is concerned only with spiritual objects. It cannot employ force to compel men into its pale; for the only door of the Church is faith, to which there can be no compulsion,—“he that *believeth* and is baptized” becomes a member. It cannot inflict pains and penalties upon the disobedient and refractory, like civil governments; for the only punitive discipline authorized in the New Testament,

is comprised in "admonition," "reproof," "sharp rebukes," and, finally, "excision from the society." The last will be better understood if we consider the special relations in which true Christians stand to each other, and the duties resulting from them. They are members of one body, and are therefore bound to tenderness and sympathy; they are the conjoint instructors of others, and are therefore to strive to be of "one judgment;" they are brethren, and they are to love one another *as such*, that is, with an affection more special than that general good will which they are commanded to bear to all mankind; they are therefore to seek the intimacy of friendly society among themselves, and, except in the ordinary and courteous intercourse of life, they are bound to keep themselves separate from the world; they are enjoined to do good unto all men, but "specially to them that are of the household of faith;" and they are forbidden "to eat" at the Lord's Table with immoral persons, that is, with those who, although they continue their Christian profession, dishonour it by their practice. With these relations of Christians to each other and to the world, and their correspondent duties before our minds, we may easily interpret the nature of that extreme discipline which is vested in the Church. "Persons who will not hear the Church" are to be held "as heathen men and publicans," as those who are not members of it; that is, they are to be separated from it, and regarded as of "the world," quite out of the range of the above-mentioned relations of Christians to each other, and their correspondent duties; but still, like "heathen men and publicans," they are to be the objects of pity, and general benevolence. Nor is this extreme discipline to be hastily inflicted before "a first and second admonition," nor before those who are "spiritual" have attempted "to restore a brother overtaken by a fault;" and when the "wicked person" is "put away," still the door is to be kept open for his reception again upon repentance. The true excommunication of the Christian Church is therefore a merciful and considerate separation of an incorrigible offender from the body of Christians, without any infliction of civil pains or penalties. "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which ye have received from us," 2 Thess. iii, 6. "Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump," 1 Cor. v, 5. "But now I have written to you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner, with such a one, no not to eat," 1 Cor. v, 11. This then is the



moral discipline which is imperative upon the Church of Christ, and its government is criminally defective whenever it is not enforced. On the other hand, the disabilities and penalties which established Churches in different places have connected with these sentences of excommunication, have no countenance at all in Scripture, and are wholly inconsistent with the spiritual character and ends of the Christian association.

As to the second point,—the *persons* to whom the government of the Church is committed, it is necessary to consider the composition, so to speak, of the primitive Church, as stated in the New Testament.

A full enunciation of these offices we find in Ephesians iv, 11 : “And he gave some, Apostles ; and some, Prophets ; and some, Evangelists ; and some, Pastors and Teachers ; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.” Of these, the office of Apostle is allowed by all to have been confined to those immediately commissioned by Christ to witness the fact of his miracles and of his resurrection from the dead, and to reveal the complete system of Christian doctrine and duty ; confirming their extraordinary mission by miracles wrought by themselves. If by “Prophets” we are to understand persons who foretold future events, then the office was from its very nature extraordinary, and the gift of prophecy has passed away with the other miraculous endowments of the first age of Christianity. If, with others, we understand that these Prophets were extraordinary teachers raised up until the churches were settled under permanent qualified instructors ; still the office was temporary. The “Evangelists” are generally understood to be assistants of the Apostles, who acted under their especial authority and direction. Of this number were Timothy and Titus : and as the Apostle Paul directed them to ordain Bishops or Presbyters in the several Churches, but gave them no authority to ordain successors to themselves in their particular office as Evangelists, it is clear that the Evangelists must also be reckoned among the number of extraordinary and temporary Ministers suited to the first age of Christianity. Whether by “Pastors and Teachers” two offices be meant, or one, has been disputed. The change in the mode of expression seems to favour the latter view, and so the text is interpreted by St. Jerome, and St. Augustine ; but the point is of little consequence. A Pastor was a Teacher ; although every Teacher might not be a Pastor ; but in many cases be confined to the office of subordinate instruction, whether as an expounder of doctrine, a catechist, or even a more private instructor of those

who as yet were unacquainted with the first principles of the gospel of Christ. The term Pastor implies the duties both of instruction and of government, of feeding and of ruling the flock of Christ; and, as the Presbyters or Bishops were ordained in the several churches, both by the Apostles and Evangelists, and rules are left by St. Paul as to their appointment, there can be no doubt but that these are the "Pastors" spoken of in the Epistle to the Ephesians, and that they were designed to be the permanent Ministers of the Church; and that with them both the government of the Church and the performance of its leading religious services were deposited. Deacons had the charge of the gifts and offerings for charitable purposes, although, as appears from Justin Martyr, not in every instance; for he speaks of the weekly oblations as being deposited with the chief Minister, and distributed by him.

Whether Bishops and Presbyters be designations of the same office, or these appellatives express two distinct sacred orders, is a subject which has been controverted by Episcopalians and Presbyterians with much warmth; and whoever would fully enter into their arguments from Scripture and antiquity, must be referred to this controversy, which is too large to be here more than glanced at. The argument drawn by the Presbyterians from the promiscuous use of these terms in the New Testament, to prove that the same *order* of Ministers is expressed by them, appears incontrovertible. When St. Paul, for instance, sends for the "Elders," or Presbyters, of the Church of Ephesus to meet him at Miletus, he thus charges them, "Take heed to yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you Overseers," or Bishops. That here the Elders or Presbyters are called "Bishops," cannot be denied, and the very office assigned to them, to "*feed the Church of God*," and the injunction, to "*take heed to the flock*," show that the office of Elder or Presbyter is the same as that of "*Pastor*" in the passage just quoted from the Epistle to the Ephesians. St. Paul directs Titus to "ordain Elders (Presbyters) in every city," and then adds, as a directory of ordination, "*a Bishop must be blameless*," &c, plainly marking the same office by these two convertible appellations. "Bishops and Deacons" are the only classes of Ministers addressed in the Epistle to the Philippians; and if the Presbyters were not understood to be included under the term "Bishops," the omission of any notice of this order of Ministers is not to be accounted for. As the Apostles, when not engaged in their own extraordinary vocation, appear to have filled the office of stated Ministers in those Churches in which they occasionally resided for considerable periods of time,

they sometimes called themselves Presbyters. "The Elder," Presbyter, "unto the elect lady," 2 John i, 1. "The Elders (Presbyters) which are among you, I exhort, who am also an Elder," (Presbyter,) and from what follows, the highest offices of teaching and government in the Church are represented as vested in the Presbyters. "*Feed* the flock of God, which is among you, taking the *oversight* thereof." There seems, therefore, to be the most conclusive evidence, from the New Testament, that, after the extraordinary ministry vested in Apostles, Prophets, and Evangelists, as mentioned by St. Paul, had ceased, the feeding and oversight, that is, the teaching and government of the Churches, devolved upon an order of men indiscriminately called "Pastors," "Presbyters," and "Bishops," the two latter names growing into most frequent use; and with this the testimony of the Apostolical Fathers, so far as their writings are acknowledged to be free from later interpolations, agrees.

It is not indeed to be doubted, that, at a very early period, in some instances probably from the time of the Apostles themselves, a distinction arose between Bishops and Presbyters; and the whole strength of the cause of the Episcopalians lies in this fact. Still this gives not the least sanction to the notion of Bishops being a superior *order* of Ministers to Presbyters, invested, in virtue of that order, and by divine right, with powers of government both over Presbyters and people, and possessing exclusively the authority of ordaining to the sacred offices of the Church. As little too will that ancient distinction be found to prove any thing in favour of diocesan Episcopacy, which is of still later introduction.

Could it be made clear that the power of ordaining to the Ministry was given to Bishops to the exclusion of Presbyters, that would indeed go far to prove the former a distinct and superior order of Ministers in their original appointment. But there is no passage in the New Testament which gives this power at all to Bishops, as thus distinguished from Presbyters; whilst all the examples of ordination which it exhibits are confined to Apostles, to Evangelists, or to Presbyters, in conjunction with them. St. Paul; in 2 Timothy i, 6, says, "Wherefore I put thee in remembrance, that thou stir up the gift of God which is in thee, by the putting on of my hands;" but in 1 Timothy iv, 14, he says, "Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the *Presbytery*;" which two passages, referring, as they plainly do, to the same event, the setting apart of Timothy for the ministry, show that the Presbytery were associated with St. Paul in the office of ordination, and further prove



that the exclusive assumption of this power, as by divine right, by Bishops, is an aggression upon the rights of Presbyters, for which not only can no scriptural authority be pleaded, but which is in direct opposition to it.

The early distinction made between Bishops and Presbyters may be easily accounted for, without allowing this assumed distinction of order. In some of the Churches mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles, the Apostles ordained several Elders or Presbyters, partly to supply the present need, and to provide for the future increase of believers, as it is observed by Clemens in his Epistle. Another reason would also urge this:—Before the building of spacious edifices for the assemblies of the Christians living in one city, and in its neighbourhood, in common, their meetings for public worship must necessarily have been held in different houses or rooms obtained for the purpose; and to each assembly an Elder would be requisite for the performance of worship. That these Elders or Presbyters had the power of government in the Churches cannot be denied, because it is expressly assigned to *them* in Scripture. It was inherent in their pastoral office; and “the Elders that *rule well*,” were to be “counted worthy of double honour.” A number of Elders, therefore, being ordained by the Apostles to one Church, gave rise to the *catus presbyterorum*, in which assembly the affairs of the Church were attended to, and measures taken for the spread of the Gospel, by the aid of the common counsel and efforts of the whole. This meeting of Presbyters would naturally lead to the appointment, whether by seniority or by election, of one to preside over the proceedings of this assembly for the sake of order; and to him was given the title of *Angel* of the Church, and *Bishop* by way of eminence. The latter title came in time to be exclusively used of the presiding Elder, because of that special *oversight* imposed upon him by his office, and which, as Churches were raised up in the neighbourhood of the larger cities, would also naturally be extended over them. Independently of his fellow Presbyters, however, he did nothing.

The whole of this arrangement shows, that in those particulars in which they were left free by the Scriptures, the primitive Christians adopted that arrangement for the government of the Church which promised to render it most efficient for the maintenance of truth and piety; but they did not at this early period set up that unscriptural distinction of order between Bishops and Presbyters, which obtained afterwards. Hence Jerome, even in the fourth century, contends against this doctrine, and says, that before there were parties in religion, Churches were governed *communi consilio pres-*

*byterorum*; but that afterwards, it became a universal practice, founded upon experience of its *expediency*, that one of the Presbyters should be *chosen by the rest* to be the head, and that the care of the Church should be committed to him. He therefore exhorts Presbyters to remember that they are subject by *the custom* of the Church to him that presides over them; and reminds Bishops that they are greater than Presbyters, rather by *custom* than by the *appointment of the Lord*; and that the Church ought still to be governed in common. The testimony of antiquity also shows, that, after Episcopacy had very greatly advanced its claims, the Presbyters continued to be associated with the Bishop in the management of the affairs of the Church.

Much light is thrown upon the constitution of the primitive Churches, by recollecting that they were formed very much upon the model of the Jewish synagogues. We have already seen that the mode of public worship in the primitive Church was taken from the synagogue service, and so also was its arrangement of offices. Each synagogue had its Rulers, Elders, or Presbyters, of whom one was the Angel of the Church, or Minister of the Synagogue, who superintended the public service; directed those that read the Scriptures, and offered up the prayers, and blessed the people. The president of the council of Elders or Rulers was called, by way of eminence, the "Ruler of the Synagogue;" and in some places, as Acts xiii, 15, we read of these "Rulers" in the plural number; a sufficient proof that one was not elevated *in order* above the rest. The Angel of the Church, and the Minister of the Synagogue, might be the same as he who was invested with the office of President; or these offices might be held by others of the Elders. Lightfoot, indeed, states that the Rulers in each synagogue were three, whilst the Presbyters or Elders were ten. To this council of grave and wise men, the affairs of the synagogue, both as to worship and discipline, were committed. In the synagogue they sat by themselves in a semicircle, and the people before them, face to face. This was the precise form in which the Bishop and Presbyters used to sit in the primitive Churches. The description of the worship of the synagogue by a Jewish Rabbi, and that of the primitive Church by early Christian writers, presents an obvious correspondence. "The Elders," says Maimonides, "sit with their faces towards the people, and their backs to the place where the law is deposited; and all the people sit rank before rank; so the faces of all the people are towards the sanctuary, and towards the Elders; and when the Minister of the sanctuary standeth up to prayer, he standeth with his face towards the

sanctuary, as do the rest of the people." In the same order the first Christians sat with their faces towards the Bishops and Presbyters, first to hear the Scriptures read by the proper Reader ; "then," says Justin Martyr, "the Reader sitting down, the President of the assembly stands up and makes a sermon of instruction and exhortation ; after this is ended, we all stand up to prayers ; prayers being ended, the bread, wine, and water are all brought forth ; then the President again praying and praising to his utmost ability, the people testify their consent by saying, Amen." (8) "Here we have the Scriptures read by one appointed for that purpose, as in the synagogue ; after which follows the word of exhortation by the President of the assembly, who answers to the Minister of the synagogue ; after this, public prayers are performed by the same person ; then the solemn acclamation of Amen by the people, which was the undoubted practice of the synagogue." (9) Ordination of Presbyters or Elders is also from the Jews. Their Priests were not ordained, but succeeded to their office by birth ; but the Rulers and Elders of the synagogue received ordination by imposition of hands and prayer.

Such was the model which the Apostles followed in providing for the future regulation of the Churches they had raised up. They took it, not from the temple and its Priesthood ; for that was typical, and was then passing away. But they found in the institution of synagogues a plan admirably adapted to the simplicity and purity of Christianity, one to which some of the first converts in most places were accustomed, and which was capable of being applied to the new dispensation without danger of Judaizing. It secured the assembling of the people on the Sabbath, the reading of the Scriptures, the preaching of sermons, and the offering of public prayer and thanksgiving. It provided too for the government of the Church by a Council of Presbyters, ordained solemnly to their office by imposition of hands and prayer ; and it allowed of that presidency of one Presbyter chosen by the others, which was useful for order and for unity, and by which age, piety, and gifts, might preserve their proper influence in the Church. The advance from this state of scriptural Episcopacy to Episcopacy under another form was the work of a later age.

When the Gospel made its way into towns and villages, the concerns of the Christians in these places naturally fell under the cognizance and direction of the Bishops of the neighbouring cities. Thus *diocesses* were gradually formed, comprehending districts of country, of different extent. These diocesses were originally

(8) *Apol.* 2.(9) STILLINGFLEET'S *Irenicum*.



called *παροικίαι*, *parishes*, and the word *διοίκησις*, *diocess*, was not used in its modern sense till at least the fourth century ; and when we find Ignatius describing it as the duty of a Bishop, “to speak to each member of the Church separately, to seek out all by name, even the slaves of both sexes, and to advise every one of the flock in the affair of marriage,” diocesses, as one observes, must have been very limited, or the labour inconceivably great.

“As Christianity increased and overspread all parts, and especially the cities of the empire, it was found necessary yet farther to enlarge the Episcopal office ; and as there was commonly a Bishop in every *great city*, so in the *metropolis*, (as the *Romans* called it,) the mother city of every *province*, (wherein they had courts of civil judicature,) there was an ARCHBISHOP or a METROPOLITAN, who had ecclesiastical jurisdiction over all the Churches within that province. He was superior to all the Bishops within those limits ; to him it belonged to *ordain* or to *ratify* the elections and ordinations of all the Bishops within his province, insomuch that without his confirmation they were looked upon as null and void. Once at least every year he was to summon the Bishops under him to a *Synod*, to inquire into and direct the ecclesiastical affairs within that province ; to inspect the lives and manners, the opinions and principles of his Bishops ; to admonish, reprove, and suspend them that were disorderly and irregular ; if any controversies or contentions happened between any of them, he was to have the *hearing* and *determination* of them ; and indeed no matter of *moment* was done within the whole province, without first consulting him in the case. When this office of *Metropolitan* first began, I find not ; only this we are sure of, that the Council of *Nice*, settling the just rights and privileges of *Metropolitan Bishops*, speaks of them as a thing of *ancient date*, ushering in the *canon* with an *αρχαία εθνη κρατεῖτω*, *Let ancient customs still take place*. The original of the *institution* seems to have been partly to comply with the people’s occasions, who oft resorted to the *metropolis* for despatch of their affairs, and so might fitly discharge their *civil* and *ecclesiastical* both at once ; and partly because of the great confluence of people to that city : that the Bishop of it might have pre-eminence above the rest, and the honour of the *Church* bear some proportion to that of the *State*.

“After this sprung up another *branch* of the Episcopal office, as much superior to that of *Metropolitans*, as theirs was to ordinary Bishops ; these were called PRIMATES and PATRIARCHS, and had jurisdiction over many provinces. For the understanding of this, it is necessary to know, that, when Christianity came to be fully

settled in the world, they contrived to model the external government of the Church, as near as might be, to the civil government of the *Roman* empire; the parallel is most exactly drawn by an *ingenious* person of our own nation; the sum of it is this:—The whole empire of *Rome* was divided into thirteen *diocesses*, (so they called those divisions,) these contained about *one hundred and twenty provinces*, and every province several *cities*. Now, as in every city there was a *temporal* Magistrate for the executing of justice, and keeping the peace, both for that city, and the towns round about it; so was there also a *Bishop* for spiritual order and government, whose jurisdiction was of like extent and latitude. In every province there was a Proconsul or President, whose seat was usually at the *metropolis*, or chief city of the province; and hither all inferior cities came for judgment in matters of importance. And in proportion to this there was in the same city an *Archbishop* or *Metropolitan*, for matters of ecclesiastical concernment. Lastly, in every *diocess* the Emperors had their *Vicarii* or *Lieutenants*, who dwelt in the principal city of the *diocess*, where all imperial *edicts* were published, and from whence they were sent abroad into the several provinces, and where was the chief *tribunal* where all causes not determinable elsewhere, were decided. And, to answer this, there was in the same city a *Primate*, to whom the last determination of all appeals from all the provinces in differences of the *Clergy*, and the sovereign care of all the *diocess* for sundry points of spiritual government, did belong. This, in short, is the sum of the account which that *learned* man gives of this matter. So that the *Patriarch*, as superior to the *Metropolitans*, was to have under his jurisdiction not any one single province, but a whole *diocess*, (in the old *Roman* notion of that word,) consisting of many *provinces*. To him belonged the ordination of all the *Metropolitans* that were under him, as also the summoning them to Councils, the *correcting* and reforming the misdemeanors they were guilty of; and from his judgment and sentence, in things properly within his cognizance, there lay no appeal. To this I shall only add what *Salmasius* has noted, that as the *diocess* that was governed by the *Vicarius* had many *provinces* under it, so the *Præfectus Prætorio* had several *diocesses* under him: and in proportion to this, probable it was, that *Patriarchs* were first brought in, who, if not superior to *Primates* in jurisdiction and power, were yet in *honour*, by reason of the dignity of those cities where their Sees were fixed, as at *Rome*, *Constantinople*, *Alexandria*, *Antioch*, and *Jerusalem*.”(1)

(1) CAYE'S *Primitive Christianity*.

Thus diocesan Bishops, Metropolitans, Primates, Patriarchs, and finally the Pope, came in, which offices are considered as corruptions or improvements; as dictated by the necessities of the Church, or as instances of worldly ambition; as of Divine right, or from Satan; according to the different views of those who have written on such subjects. As to them all it may, however, be said, that, so far as they are pleaded for as of Divine right, they have no support from the New Testament; and if they are placed upon the only ground on which they can be reasonably discussed, that of necessity and good polity, they must be tried by circumstances, and their claims of authority be so defined that it may be known how far they are compatible with those principles with which the New Testament abounds, although it contains no formal plan of Church government. The only scriptural objection to Episcopacy, as it is understood in modern times, is its assumption of superiority of *order*, of an exclusive right to govern the Pastors as well as the flock, and to ordain to the Christian Ministry. These exclusive powers are by the New Testament no where granted to Bishops in distinction from Presbyters. The government of Pastors as well as people, was at first in the assembly of Presbyters, who were individually accountable to that ruling body, and that whether they had a president or not. So also as to ordination; it was a right in each, although used by several together, for better security; and even when the presence of a Bishop came to be thought necessary to the validity of ordination, the Presbyters were not excluded.

As for the argument from the succession of Bishops from the times of the Apostles, could the fact be made out it would only trace diocesan Bishops to the Bishops of parishes; those, to the Bishops of single churches; and Bishops of a supposed superior order, to Bishops who never thought themselves more than presiding Presbyters, *primi inter pares*. This therefore would only show that an unscriptural assumption of distinct orders has been made, which that succession, if established, would refute. But the succession itself is imaginary. Even Epiphanius, a Bishop of the fourth century, gives this account of things, "that the Apostles were not able to settle all things at once. But according to the number of believers, and the qualifications for the different offices which those whom they found appeared to possess, they appointed in some places only a Bishop and Deacons; in others Presbyters and Deacons; in others a Bishop, Presbyters, and Deacons:"—a statement fatal to the argument from succession. As for the pretended catalogues of Bishops of the different Churches from the



days of the Apostles, exhibited by some ecclesiastical writers, they are filled up by forgeries and inventions of later times. Eusebius, more honest, begins his catalogue with declaring, that it is not easy to say who were the disciples of the Apostles that were appointed to feed the Churches which they planted, excepting only those whom we read of in the writings of St. Paul.

Whether Episcopacy may not be a matter of prudential regulation, is another question. We think it often may; and that Churches are quite at liberty to adopt this mode, provided they maintain St. Jerome's distinction, that "Bishops are greater than Presbyters rather by custom than by appointment of the Lord, and that still the Church ought to be governed in common," that is, by Bishops and Presbyters united. It was on this ground that Luther placed Episcopacy,—as useful, though not of Divine right; it was by admitting this liberty in Churches, that Calvin and other Divines of the Reformed Churches allowed Episcopacy and diocesan Churches to be lawful, there being nothing to forbid such an arrangement in Scripture, when placed on the principle of expediency. Some Divines of the English Church have chosen to defend its Episcopacy wholly upon this ground, as alone tenable; and, admitting that it is safest to approach as near as possible to primitive practice, have proposed the restoration of Presbyters as a senate to the Bishop, the contraction of diocesses, the placing of Bishops in all great towns, and the holding of provincial Synods;—thus raising the Presbyters to their original rank, as the Bishop's "*compresbyters*," as Cyprian himself calls them, both in government and in ordinations.

As to that kind of Episcopacy which trenches upon no scriptural principle, much depends upon circumstances, and the forms in which Christian Churches exist. When a Church composes but one congregation, the Minister is unquestionably a scriptural Bishop; but he is, and can be, only Bishop of the flock, *episcopus gregis*. Of this kind, it appears from the extract given above from Epiphanius, were some of the primitive Churches, existing, probably, in the smaller and more remote places. Where a number of Presbyters were ordained to one Church, these would, in their common assembly, have the oversight and government of each other as well as of the people; and, in this their collective capacity, they would be *episcopi gregis et pastorum*. In this manner, Episcopacy, as implying the oversight and government both of Ministers and their flocks, exists in Presbyterian Churches, and in all others, by whatever name they are called, where Ministers are subject to the discipline of assemblies of Ministers who admit to the Ministry by joint

consent, and censure or remove those who are so appointed. When the ancient Presbyteries elected a Bishop, he might remain, as he appears to have done for some time, the mere president of the assembly of Presbyters, and their organ of administration; or be constituted, as afterwards, a distinct governing power, although assisted by the advice of his Presbyters. He was then in person an *episcopus gregis et pastorum*, and his official powers gave rise at length to the unfounded distinction of superior order. But abating this false principle, even diocesan Episcopacy may be considered as in many possible associations of Churches throughout a province, or a whole country, as an arrangement in some circumstances of a wise and salutary nature. Nor do the evils which arose in the Church of Christ appear so attributable to this form of government as to that too intimate connexion of the Church with the State, which gave to the former a political character, and took it from under the salutary control of public opinion,—an evil greatly increased by the subsequent destruction of religious liberty, and the coercive interferences of the civil Magistratè.

At the same time, it may be very well questioned, whether any Presbyters could lawfully surrender into the hands of a Bishop their own rights of government and ordination without that security for their due administration which arises from the accountability of the administrator. That these are rights which it is not imperative upon the individual possessing them to exercise individually, appears to have the judgment of the earliest antiquity, because the assembly of Presbyters, which was probably co-existent with the ordination of several Presbyters to one Church by the Apostles, necessarily placed the exercise of the office of each under the direction and control of all. When therefore a Bishop was chosen by the Presbyters, and invested with the government, and the power of granting orders, so long as the Presbyters remained his Council, and nothing was done but by their concurrence, they were still parties to the mode in which their own powers were exercised, and were justifiable in placing the administration in the hands of one, who was still dependent upon themselves. In this way they probably thought that their own powers might be most efficiently and usefully exercised. Provincial and national Synods or Councils, exercising a proper superintendence over Bishops when made even more independent of their Presbyters than was the case in the best periods of the primitive Church, might also, if meeting frequently and regularly, and as a part of an ecclesiastical system, afford the same security for good administration, and might justify the surrender of the exercise of their powers by the Presbyters.

But when that surrender was formally made, or is at any time made now in the constitution of Churches, to Bishops, or to those bearing a similar office however designated, without security and control, either by making that office temporary and elective, or by the constitution of Synods or Assemblies of the Ministers of a large and united body of Christians for the purpose of supreme government, an office is created which has not only no countenance in Scripture, that of a Bishop independent of Presbyters, but one which implies an unlawful surrender of those powers, on the part of the latter, with which they were invested, not for their own sakes, but for the benefit of the Church; and which they could have no authority to divest themselves of and to transfer, without retaining the power of counselling and controlling the party charged with the administration of them. In other words, Presbyters have a right, under proper regulations, to appoint another to administer for them, or to consent to such an arrangement when they find it already existing; but they have no power to divest themselves of these rights and duties absolutely. If these principles be sound, modern Episcopacy, in many Churches, is objectionable in other respects than as it assumes an unscriptural distinction of order.

The following is a liberal concession on the subject of Episcopacy, from a strenuous defender of that form of government as it exists in the Church of England:—

“It is not contended that the Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, of England, are at present precisely the same that Bishops, Presbyters, and Deacons, were in Asia Minor seventeen hundred years ago. We only maintain that there have always been Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, in the Christian Church, since the days of the Apostles, with different powers and functions, it is allowed, in different countries and at different periods; but the general principles and duties which have respectively characterized these clerical orders, have been essentially the same at all times, and in all places; and the variations which they have undergone, have only been such as have ever belonged to all persons in public situations, whether civil or ecclesiastical, and which are indeed inseparable from every thing in which mankind are concerned in this transitory and fluctuating world.

“I have thought it right to take this general view of the ministerial office, and to make these observations upon the clerical orders subsisting in this kingdom, for the purpose of pointing out the foundation and principles of Church authority, and of showing that our ecclesiastical establishment is as nearly conformable, as change of circumstances will permit, to the practice of the primitive



Church. But, though I flatter myself that I have proved Episcopacy to be an Apostolical institution, yet I readily acknowledge that there is no precept in the New Testament which commands that every Church should be governed by Bishops. No Church can exist without some government; but though there must be rules and orders for the proper discharge of the offices of public worship, though there must be fixed regulations concerning the appointment of Ministers, and though a subordination among them is expedient in the highest degree, yet it does not follow that all these things must be precisely the same in every Christian country; they may vary with the other varying circumstances of human society, with the extent of a country, the manners of its inhabitants, the nature of its civil government, and many other peculiarities which might be specified. As it has not pleased our Almighty Father to prescribe any particular form of civil government for the security of temporal comforts to his rational creatures, so neither has he prescribed any particular form of ecclesiastical polity as absolutely necessary to the attainment of eternal happiness. But he has, in the most explicit terms, enjoined obedience to all governors, whether civil or ecclesiastical, and whatever may be their denomination, as essential to the character of a true Christian. Thus the Gospel only lays down general principles, and leaves the application of them to men as free agents.”(2)

Bishop Tomline, however, and the high Episcopalians of the Church of England, contend for an original distinction in the office and order of Bishops and Presbyters, in which notion they are contradicted by one who may be truly called the Founder of the Church of England, Archbishop Cranmer, who says, “The Bishops and Priests were at one time, and were not two things; but both one office in the beginning of Christ’s religion.”(3)

On the subject of THE CHURCH itself, opinions as opposite or varying as possible have been held, down from that of the Papists, who contend for its visible unity throughout the world under a visible head, to that of the Independents, who consider the universal Church as composed of congregational Churches, each perfect in itself, and entirely independent of every other.

The first opinion is manifestly contradicted by the language of the Apostles, who, whilst they teach that there is but one Church, composed of believers throughout the world, think it not at all inconsistent with this to speak of “the Churches of Judea,” “of Achaia,” “the seven Churches of Asia,” “the Church at Ephesus,” &c.

(2) Bishop TOMLINE’S *Elements*.

(3) STILLINGFLEET’S *Irenicum*, p. 392.

Among themselves the Apostles had no common head; but planted Churches and gave directions for their government, in most cases without any apparent correspondence with each other. The popish doctrine is certainly not found in their writings, and so far were they from making provision for the government of this one supposed Church, by the appointment of one visible and exclusive head, that they provide for the future government of the respective Churches raised up by them, in a totally different manner, that is, by the ordination of Ministers for each Church, who are indifferently called Bishops, and Presbyters, and Pastors. The only unity of which they speak is the unity of the whole Church in Christ, the invisible Head, by faith; and the unity produced by "fervent love towards each other." Nor has the popish doctrine of the visible unity of the Church any countenance from early antiquity. The best ecclesiastical historians have showed, that, through the greater part of the second century, "the Christian Churches were independent of each other. Each Christian assembly was a little State governed by its own laws, which were either enacted, or at least approved by the society. But in process of time, all the Churches of a province were formed into one large ecclesiastical body, which, like confederate States, assembled at certain times in order to deliberate about the common interests of the whole." (4) So far indeed this union of Churches appears to have been a wise and useful arrangement, although afterwards it was carried to an injurious extreme, until finally it gave birth to the assumptions of the Bishop of Rome, as universal Bishop; a claim, however, which when most successful, was but partially submitted to, the Eastern Churches having always maintained their independence. No very large association of Churches of any kind existed till towards the close of the second century, which sufficiently refutes the papal argument from antiquity.

The independence of the early Christian Churches does not, however, appear to have resembled that of the Churches which in modern times are called Independent. During the lives of the Apostles and Evangelists, they were certainly subject to their counsel and control, which proves that the independency of separate societies was not the first form of the Church. It may, indeed, be allowed, that some of the smaller and more insulated Churches might, after the death of the Apostles and Evangelists, retain this form for some considerable time; but the larger Churches, in the chief cities, and those planted in populous neighbourhoods, had

(4) MOSHEIM'S *Ecclesiastical History*, Cent. 2, Chap. ii.

many Presbyters, and as the members multiplied, they had several separate assemblies or congregations, yet all under the same common government. And when Churches were raised up in the neighbourhood of cities, the appointment of *Chorepiscopi*, or country Bishops, and of visiting Presbyters, both acting under the Presbytery of the city, with its Bishop at its head, is sufficiently in proof, that the ancient Churches, especially the larger and more prosperous of them, existed in that form which, in modern times, we should call a religious Connexion, subject to a common government. This appears to have arisen out of the very circumstance of the increase of the Church, through the zeal of the first Christians; and in the absence of all direction by the Apostles, that every new society of believers raised should be formed into an Independent Church, it was doubtless much more in the spirit of the very first discipline exercised by the Apostles and Evangelists, (when none of the Churches were independent, but remained under the government of those who had been chiefly instrumental in raising them up,) to place themselves under a common inspection, and to unite the weak with the strong, and the newly converted with those who were "in Christ before them." There was also in this, greater security afforded both for the continuance of wholesome doctrine, and of godly discipline.

The persons appointed to feed and govern the Church of Christ being, then, as we have seen, those who are called "*Pastors*," a word which imports both *care* and *government*, two other subjects claim our attention,—the share which the body of the people have in their own government by their Pastors, and the objects towards which the power of government, thus established in the Church, is legitimately directed.

As to the first, some preliminary observations may be necessary.

1. When Churches are professedly connected with, and exclusively patronized and upheld by, the State, questions of ecclesiastical government arise, which are of greater perplexity and difficulty than when they are left upon their original ground, as voluntary and spiritual associations. The State will not exclusively recognise Ministers without maintaining some control over their functions; and will not lend its aid to enforce the canons of an established Church, without reserving to itself some right of appeal, or of interposition. Hence a contest between the civil and ecclesiastical powers often springs up, and one at least generally feels itself to be fettered by the other. When an established Church is perfectly tolerant, and the State allows freedom of dissent and separation from it without penalties, these evils are much mitigated. But



it is not my design to consider a Church as at all allied with the State ; but as deriving nothing from it except protection, and that general countenance which the influence of a government, professing Christianity and recognising its laws, must afford.

2. The only view in which the sacred writers of the New Testament appear to have contemplated the Churches, was that of associations founded upon conviction of the truth of Christianity, and the obligatory nature of the commands of Christ. They considered the Pastors as dependent for their support upon the free contributions of the people ; and the people as bound to sustain, love, and obey them in all things lawful, that is, in all things agreeable to the doctrine they had received in the Scriptures, and, in things indifferent, to pay respectful deference to them. They enjoined it upon the Pastors to “rule well,” “diligently,” and with fidelity, in executing the directions they had given them ;—to silence all teachers of false doctrines, and their adherents ;—to reprove unruly and immoral members of the Church, and, if incorrigible, to put them away. On the other hand, should any of their Pastors or Teachers err in doctrine, the people are enjoined not “to receive them,” to “turn away” from them, and not even to bid them “God speed.” The rule which forbids Christians “to eat,” that is, to communicate at the Lord’s table with an immoral “brother,” held, of course, good, when that brother was a Pastor. Thus Pastors were put by them under the influence of the public opinion of the Churches ; and the remedy of separating from them, in manifest defections of doctrine and morals, was afforded to the sound members of a Church, should no power exist, able or inclined to silence the offending Pastor and his party. In all this, principles were recognised, which, had they not been in future times lost sight of or violated, would have done much, perhaps every thing, to preserve some parts of the Church, at least, in soundness of faith, and purity of manners. A perfect religious liberty is always supposed by the Apostles to exist among Christians ; no compulsion of the civil power is any where assumed by them as the basis of their advices or directions ; no binding of the members to one Church, without liberty to join another, by any ties but those involved in moral considerations, of sufficient weight, however, to prevent the evils of faction and schism. It was this which created a natural and competent check upon the Ministers of the Church ; for being only sustained by the opinion of the Churches, they could not but have respect to it ; and it was this which gave to the sound part of a fallen Church the advantage of renouncing, upon sufficient and well weighed grounds, their com-

munion with it, and of kindling up the light of a pure ministry and a holy discipline, by forming a separate association, bearing its testimony against errors in doctrine, and failures in practice. Nor is it to be conceived, that, had this simple principle of perfect religious liberty been left unviolated through subsequent ages, the Church could ever have become so corrupt, or with such difficulty and slowness have been recovered from its fall. This ancient Christian liberty has happily been restored in a few parts of Christendom.

3. In places where now the communion with particular Churches, as to human authority, is perfectly voluntary, and liberty of conscience is unfettered, it often happens that questions of Church government are argued on the assumption that the governing power in such Churches is of the same character, and tends to the same results, as where it is connected with civil influence, and is upheld by the power of the State.

Nothing can be more fallacious, and no instrument has been so powerful as this in the hands of the restless and factious, to delude the unwary. Those who possess the governing power in such Churches are always under the influence of public opinion to an extent unfelt in establishments. They can enforce nothing felt to be oppressive to the members in general, without dissolving the society itself; and their utmost power extends to excision from the body, which, unlike the sentences of excommunication in State Churches, is wholly unconnected with civil penalties. If, then, a resistance is created to any regulations among the major part of any such religious community, founded on a sense of their injurious operation, or to the manner of their enforcement; and if that feeling be the result of a settled conviction, and not the effervescence of temporary mistake and excitement, a change must necessarily ensue, or the body at large be disturbed or dissolved: if, on the other hand, this feeling be the work of a mere faction, partial tumults or separation may take place, and great moral evil may result to the factious parties, but the body will retain its communion, which will be a sufficient proof that the governing power has been the subject of ungrounded and uncharitable attack, since otherwise the people at large must have felt the evils of the general regulations or administration complained of. The very terms often used in the grand controversy arising out of the struggle for the establishment of religious liberty with national and intolerant Churches, are not generally appropriate to such discussions as may arise in voluntary religious societies, although they are often employed, either carelessly or *ad captandum*, to serve the purposes of faction.

4. It is also an important general observation, that, in settling the government of a Church, there are pre-existent laws of Christ, which it is not in the option of any to receive or to reject. Under whatever form the governing power is arranged, it is so bound to execute all the rules left by Christ and his Apostles, as to doctrine, worship, the sacraments, and discipline, honestly interpreted, that it is not at liberty to take that office, or to continue to exercise it, if by any restrictions imposed upon it it is prevented from carrying these laws into effect. As in the State, so in the Church, government is an ordinance of God; and as it is imperative upon rulers in the State to be "a terror to evil doers, and a praise to them that do well," so also is it imperative upon the rulers of the Church to banish strange doctrines, to uphold God's ordinances, to reprove and rebuke, and, finally, to put away evil doers. The spirit in which this is to be done is also prescribed. It is to be done in the spirit of meekness, and with long suffering; but the work must be done upon the responsibility of the Pastors to Him who has commissioned them for this purpose; and they have a right to require from the people, that in this office and ministry they should not only not be obstructed, but affectionately and zealously aided, as ministering in these duties, sometimes painful, not for themselves, but for the good of the whole. With respect to the members of a Church, the same remark is applicable as to the members of a State. It is not matter of option with them whether they will be under government according to the laws of Christ or not, for that is imperative; government in both cases being of Divine appointment. They have, on the other hand, the right to full security, that they shall be governed by the laws of Christ; and they have a right too to establish as many guards against human infirmity and passion in those who are "set over them," as may be prudently devised, provided these are not carried to such an extent as to be obstructive to the legitimate scriptural discharge of their duties. The true view of the case appears to be, that the government of the Church is in its Pastors, open to various modifications as to form; and that it is to be conducted with such a concurrence of the people, as shall constitute a sufficient guard against abuse, and yet not prevent the legitimate and efficient exercise of pastoral duties, as these duties are stated in the Scriptures. This original authority in the Pastors, and concurrent consent in the people, may be thus applied to particular cases:—

1. As to the ordination of Ministers. If we consult the New Testament, this office was never conveyed by the people. The Apostles were ordained by our Lord; the Evangelists, by the



Apostles ; the Elders in every Church, both by Apostles and Evangelists. The passage which has been chiefly urged by those who would originate the ministry from the people, is Acts xiv, 23, where the historian, speaking of St. Paul and Barnabas, says, "And when they had ordained (χειροτονήσαντες) Elders in every Church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord." Here, because χειροτονεῖν originally signified to choose by way of suffrage, some have argued that these Elders were appointed by the suffrages of the people. Long, however, before the time of St. Luke, this word was used for simple designation, without any reference to election by suffrages ; and so it is employed by St. Luke himself in the same book, Acts x, 41, "Witnesses *foreappointed* of God," where of course the suffrages of men are out of the question. It is also fatal to the argument drawn from the text, that the act implied in the word, whatever it might be, was not the act of the people, but that of Paul and Barnabas. Even the Deacons, whose appointment is mentioned Acts vi, although "looked out" by the disciples as men of honest report, did not enter upon their office till solemnly "appointed" thereto by the Apostles. Nothing is clearer in the New Testament, than that all the candidates for the ministry were judged of by those who had been placed in that office themselves, and received their appointment from them. Such too was the practice of the primitive Churches after the death of both Apostles and Evangelists. Presbyters, who during the life of the Apostles had the power of ordination, (for they laid their hands upon Timothy,) continued to perform that office in discharge of one solemn part of their duty, to perpetuate the ministry, and to provide for the wants of the Churches. In the times of the Apostles, who were endued with special gifts, the concurrence of the people was not, perhaps, always formally taken ; but the directions to Timothy and Titus imply a reference to the judgment of the members of the Church, because from them only it could be learned whether the party fixed upon for ordination possessed those qualifications without which ordination was prohibited. When the Churches assumed a more regular form, "the people were always present at ordinations, and ratified the action with their approbation and consent. To this end the Bishop was wont before every ordination to publish the names of those who were to have holy orders conferred upon them, that so the people, who best knew their lives and conversation, might interpose if they had any thing material to object against them." (5) Sometimes also they nominated them by suffrages, and

thus proposed them for ordination. The mode in which the people shall be made a concurrent party is matter of prudential regulation ; but they had an early, and certainly a reasonable right to a voice in the appointment of their Ministers, although the power of ordination was vested in Ministers alone, to be exercised on their responsibility to Christ.

2. As to the laws by which the Church is to be governed. So far as they are manifestly laid down in the word of God, and not regulations judged to be subsidiary thereto, it is plain that the rulers of a Church are bound to execute them, and the people to obey them. They cannot be matter of compact on either side, except as the subject of a mutual and solemn engagement to defer to them without any modification or appeal to any other standard.

Every Church declares in some way, how it understands the doctrine and the disciplinary laws of Christ. This declaration as to doctrine, in modern times, is made by confessions or articles of faith, in which, if fundamental error is found, the evil rests upon the head of that Church collectively, and upon the members individually, every one of whom is bound to try all doctrines by the Holy Scriptures, and cannot support an acknowledged system of error without guilt. As to discipline, the manner in which a Church provides for public worship, the publication of the Gospel, the administration of the sacraments, the instruction of the ignorant, the succour of the distressed, the admonition of the disorderly, and the excision of offenders, (which are all points on which the New Testament has issued express injunctions,) is its declaration of the manner in which it interprets those injunctions, which also it does on its own collective responsibility, and that of its members. If, however, we take for illustration of the subject before us, a Church, at least substantially right in this its interpretation of doctrine, and of the laws of Christ as to general, and, what we may call for distinction's sake, *moral* discipline ; these are the first principles upon which this Church is founded. It is either an apostolic Church, which has retained primitive faith and discipline ; or it has subsequently been collected into a new communion, on account of the fall of other Churches ; and has placed itself, according to its own conviction, upon the basis of primitive doctrine and discipline as found in the Scriptures. On this ground either the Pastors and people met and united at first ; or the people, converted to faith and holiness by the labours of one or more Pastors, holding, as they believed, these scriptural views, placed themselves under the guidance of these Pastors, and thus formed themselves into a Church state, which was their act of accession

to these principles. It is clear, therefore, that by this very act, they bind themselves to comply with the original terms of the communion into which they have entered, and that they have as to these doctrines, and as to these disciplinary laws of Christ, which are to be preached and enforced, no rights of control over Ministers, which shall prevent the just exercise of their office in these respects. They have a right to such regulations and checks as shall secure, in the best possible way, the just and faithful exercise of that office, and the honest and impartial use of that power; but this is the limit of their right; and every system of suffrages, or popular concurrence, which, under pretence of guarding against abuse of ministerial authority, makes its exercise *absolutely* and in *all cases* dependent upon the consent of those over whom it extends, goes beyond that limit, and invades the right of pastoral government, which the New Testament has established. It brings, in a word, the laws of Christ into debate, which yet the members profess to have received as their rule; and it claims to put into commission those duties which Pastors are charged by Christ personally to exercise. The Apostle Paul, had the incestuous person at Corinth denied the crime, and there had been any doubtfulness as to the fact, would unquestionably have taken the opinion of the Elders of that Church and others upon that fact; but when it became a question whether the *laws* of Christ's discipline should be exercised or not, he did not feel himself concluded by the sense of the whole Corinthian Church, which was in favour of the offender continuing in communion with them; but he instantly reprov'd them for their laxity, and issued the sentence of excision, thereby showing that an obvious law of Christ was not to be subjected to the decision of a majority.

This view indeed supposes, that such a society, like almost all the Churches ever known, has admitted in the first instance, that the power of admission into the Church, of reproof, of exhortation, and of excision from it, subject to various guards against abuses, is in the Pastors of a Church. There are some who have adopted a different opinion, supposing that the power of administering the discipline of Christ must be conveyed by them to their Ministers, and is to be wholly controlled by their suffrages; so that there is in these systems, not a provision of counsel against possible errors in the exercise of authority; not a guard against human infirmity or viciousness; not a reservation of right to determine upon the fitness of the cases to which the laws of Christ are applied; but a claim of co-administration as to these laws themselves, or rather an entire administration of them through the Pas-



tor, as a passive agent of their will. Those who adopt these views are bound to show that this is the state of things established in the New Testament. That it is not, appears plain from the very term "Pastors," which imports both care and government; mild and affectionate government indeed, but still government. Hence the office of Shepherd is applied to describe the government of God, and the government of kings. It appears too, from other titles given, not merely to Apostles, but to the Presbyters they ordained and placed over the Churches. They are called *ηγουμενοι*, rulers; *ἐπισκοποι*, overseers; *προεδρωτες*, those who preside. They are commended for "ruling well;" and they are directed "to charge," "to reprove," "to rebuke," "to watch," "to silence," "to put away." The very "account" they must give to God, in connexion with the discharge of these duties, shows that their office and responsibility was peculiar and personal, and much greater than that of any private member of the Church, which it could not be if they were the passive agents only in matters of doctrine and discipline of the will of the whole. To the double duty of *feeding* and exercising the *oversight* of the flock, a special reward is also promised when the "*Chief Shepherd* shall appear,"—a title of Christ, which shows that as the pastoral office of feeding and ruling is exercised by Christ supremely, so it is exercised by his Ministers in both branches subordinately. Finally, the exhortations to Christians to "obey them that have the rule over them," and to "submit" to them, and "to esteem them very highly for their works' sake," and to "remember them;"—all show that the ministerial office is not one of mere agency, under the absolute direction of the votes of the collected Church.

3. With respect to other disciplinary regulations, supposed by any religious society to be subsidiary to the great and scriptural ends of Church communion, these appear to be matters of mutual agreement, and are capable of modification by the mutual consent of Ministers and people, under their common responsibility to Christ, that they are done advisedly, with prayer, with reference to the edification of the Church, and so as not to infringe upon, but to promote, the influence of the doctrines, duties, and spirit of the Gospel. The consent of the people to all such regulations, either tacitly by their adoption of them, or more expressly through any regular meetings of different officers, who may be regarded as acquainted with, and representing the sentiments of the whole; as also by the approval of those aged, wise, and from different causes, influential persons, who are to be found in all societies, and who are always, whether in office or not, their natural guardians, guides,

and representatives, is necessary to confidence and harmony, and a proper security for good and orderly government. It is thus that those to whom the government or well ordering of the Church is committed, and those upon whom their influence and scriptural authority exert themselves, appear to be best brought into a state of harmony and mutual confidence; and that abundant security is afforded against all misrule, seeing that in a voluntary communion, and where perfect liberty exists for any member to unite himself to other Churches, or for any number of them to arrange themselves into a new community, subject however to the moral cautions of the New Testament against the schismatic spirit, it can never be the interest of those with whom the regulation of the affairs of a Church is lodged, voluntarily to adopt measures which can be generally felt to be onerous and injurious, nor is it practicable to persevere in them. In this method of bringing in the concurrence of the people, all assemblages of whole societies, or very large portions of them, are avoided,—a popular form of Church government, which, however it were modified so as best to accord with the scriptural authority of Ministers, could only be tolerable in very small isolated societies, and that in the times of their greatest simplicity and love. To raise into legislators and censors all the members of a Church, the young, the ignorant, and the inexperienced, is to do them great injury. It is the sure way to foster debates, contentions, and self confidence, to open the door to intrigue and policy, to tempt forward and conceited men to become a kind of religious demagogues, and entirely to destroy the salutary influence of the aged, experienced, and gifted members, by referring every decision to members and suffrages, and placing all that is good and venerable, and influential among the members themselves, at the feet of a democracy.

4. As to the power of admission into the Church, that is clearly with Ministers, to whom the office of baptism is committed, by which the door is opened into the Church universal; and as there can be no visible communion kept up with the universal Church, except by communion with some particular Church, the admission into that particular communion must be in the hands of Ministers, because it is one of the duties of their office, made such by the Scripture itself, to enjoin this mode of confessing Christ, by assembling with his saints in worship, by submitting to discipline, and by “showing forth his death” at the Lord’s Supper. We have, however, already said, that the members of a Church, although they have no right to obstruct the just exercise of this power, have the right to prevent its being unworthily exercised; and their concur-

rence with the admission, tacit or declared, according to their usages, is an arrangement, supported by analogies drawn from the New Testament, and from primitive antiquity. The expulsion of unworthy members, after admonition, devolves upon those to whom the administration of the sacraments, the signs of communion, is entrusted, and therefore upon Ministers, for this reason, that as "Shepherds" of the flock under the "Chief Shepherd," they are charged to carry his laws into effect. These laws, it is neither with them nor with the people to modify; they are already declared by superior authority; but the determination of the facts of the case to which they are to be applied, is matter of mutual investigation and decision, in order to prevent an erring or an improper exercise of authority. That such investigations should take place, not before the assembled members of a society, but before proper and select tribunals, appears not only an obviously proper, but, in many respects, a necessary regulation.

The trial of unworthy Ministers remains to be noticed, which wherever a number of religious societies exist as one Church, having therefore many Pastors, is manifestly most safely placed in the hands of those Pastors themselves, and that not only because the official acts of censure and exclusion lie with them, but for other reasons also. It can scarcely happen that a Minister should be under accusation, except in some very particular cases, but that, from his former influence, at least with a part of the people, some faction would be found to support him. In proportion to the ardour of this feeling, the other party would be excited to undue severity and bitterness. To try such a case before a whole society, there would not only be the same objection as in the case of private members; but the additional one, that parties would be more certainly formed, and be still more violent. If he must be arraigned then before some special tribunal, the most fitting is that of his brethren, provided that the parties accusing have the right to bring on such a trial upon exhibition of probable evidence, and to prosecute it without obstruction. In Churches whose Ministers are thrown solely upon the public opinion of the society, and exist as such only by their character, this is ordinarily a sufficient guard against the toleration of improper conduct; whilst it removes the trial from those whose excitement for or against the accused might on either side be unfavourable to fair and equitable decision, and to the peace of the Church.

The above remarks contain but a sketch of those principles of Church government, which appear to be contained in, or to be suggested by, the New Testament. They still leave much liberty



to Christians to adapt them in detail to the circumstances in which they are placed. The offices to be created; the meetings necessary for the management of the various affairs of the Church, spiritual and financial; the assembling of Ministers in larger or smaller numbers for counsel, and for oversight of each other, and of the Churches to which they belong; are all matters of this kind, and are left to the suggestions of wisdom and piety. The extent to which distinct societies of Christians shall associate in one Church, under a common government, appears also to be a matter of prudence and of circumstances. In the primitive Church we see different societies in a city and its neighbourhood under the common government of the assembly of Presbyters; and afterwards these grew into provincial Churches, of greater or smaller extent. In modern times, we have similar associations in the form of national Churches, Episcopal or Presbyterian; and of Churches existing without any recognition of the State at all, and forming smaller or larger communities, from the union of a few societies, to the union of societies throughout a whole country; holding the same doctrines, practising the same modes of worship, and placing themselves under a common code of laws and a common government. But whatever be the form they take, they are bound to respect, and to model themselves by, the *principles* of Church communion and of Church discipline which are contained in the New Testament; and they will be fruitful in holiness and usefulness, so long as they conform to them, and so long as those forms of administration are conscientiously preferred which appear best adapted to preserve and to diffuse sound doctrine, Christian practice, spirituality, and charity. That discipline is defective and bad in itself, or it is ill administered, which does not accomplish these ends; and that is best which best promotes them.

The *ENDS* to which Church authority is legitimately directed remain to be briefly considered.

The first is, the preservation and the publication of "sound doctrine." Against false doctrines, and the men "of corrupt minds" who taught them, the sermons of Christ, and the writings of the Apostles, abound in cautions; and since St. Paul lays it down as a rule, as to erring teachers, that their "mouths must be stopped," this implies, that the power of declaring what sound doctrine is, and of silencing false teachers, was confided by the Apostles to the future Church. By systematic writers this has been called *potestas doctrinaria*; which, abused by the ambition of man, forms no small part of that antichristian usurpation which characterizes the Church of Rome. Extravagant as are her claims, so that she brings in her

traditions as of equal authority with the inspired writings, and denies to men the right of private judgment, and of trying her dogmas by the test of the Holy Scriptures ; there is a sober sense in which this power may be taken. The great Protestant principle, that the Holy Scriptures are the only standard of doctrine ; that the doctrines of every Church must be proved out of them ; and that to this standard every individual member has the right of bringing them, in order to the confirmation of his own faith ; must be held inviolate, if we would not see Divine authority displaced by human. Since, however, men may come to different conclusions upon the meaning of Scripture, it has been the practice from primitive times to declare the sense in which Scripture is understood by collective assemblies of Ministers, and by the Churches united with them, in order to the enforcement of such interpretations upon Christians generally, by the influence of learning, piety, numbers, and solemn deliberation. The reference of the question respecting circumcision by the Church at Antioch to “the Apostles and Elders at Jerusalem,” is the first instance of this, though with this peculiarity, that, in this case, the decision was given under plenary inspiration. Whilst one of the Apostles lived, an appeal could be made to him in like manner when any doctrinal novelty sprung up in the Church. After their death, smaller or larger Councils, composed of the public Teachers of the Churches, were resorted to, that they might pronounce upon these differences of opinion, and by their authority confirm the faithful, and abash the propagators of error. Still later, four Councils, called General, from the number of persons assembled in them from various parts of Christendom, have peculiar eminence. The Council of Nice, in the fourth century, which condemned the Arian heresy, and formed that scriptural and important formulary called the Nicene Creed ; the Council of Constantinople, held at the end of the same century, which condemned the errors of Macedonius, and asserted the divinity and personality of the Holy Ghost ; and the Councils of Ephesus and Chalcedon, about the middle of the fifth century, which censured the opinions of Nestorius and Eutyches. At Nice it was declared that the Son is truly God, of the same substance with the Father ; at Constantinople, that the Holy Ghost is also truly God ; at Ephesus, that the Divine nature was truly united to the human in Christ, in *one* person ; at Chalcedon, that both natures remained *distinct*, and that the human nature was not lost or absorbed in the Divine. The decisions of these Councils, both from their antiquity and from the manifest conformity of their decisions on these points to the Holy Scriptures, have been received to this day in what have been

called the Orthodox Churches, throughout the world. On General Councils, the Romish Church has been divided as to the questions, whether infallibility resides in them, or in the Pope, or in the Pope when at their head. Protestants cut this matter short by acknowledging that they have erred, and may err, being composed of fallible men, and that they have no authority but as they manifestly agree with the Scriptures. To the above-mentioned Councils, they have in general always paid great deference, as affording confirmation of the plain and literal sense of Scripture on the points in question; but on no other ground. "Things ordained by General Councils as necessary to salvation, have neither strength nor authority, unless it may be declared they be taken out of Holy Scripture." (6) The manner in which the respective Churches of the Reformation declared their doctrinal interpretation of the Scriptures on the leading points of theology, was by Confessions and Articles of Faith, and by the adoption of ancient or primitive Creeds. With reference to this practice, no doubt it is, that the Church of England declares in her twentieth Article, that "the Church hath authority in controversies of faith;" but qualifies the tenet, by adding, "and yet it is not lawful for the Church to ordain any thing that is contrary to God's word written;" in which there is a manifest recognition of the right of all who have God's word in their hands, to make use of it in order to try what any Church "ordains," as necessary to be believed. This authority of a Church in matters of doctrine appears then to be reduced to the following particulars, which, although directly opposed to the assumptions of the Church of Rome, are of great importance:—1. To declare the sense in which it interprets the language of Scripture on all the leading doctrines of the Christian revelation; for to contend, as some have done, that no creeds or articles of faith are proper, but that belief in the Scriptures only ought to be required, would be to destroy all doctrinal distinctions, since the most perverse interpreters of Scripture profess to believe the words of Scripture. 2. To require from all its members, with whom the right of private judgment is by all Protestant Churches left inviolate, to examine such declarations of faith, professing to convey the sense of Scripture, with modesty and proper respect to those grave and learned assemblies in which all these points have been weighed with deliberation; receiving them as guides to truth, not implicitly, it is true, but still with docility and humility. "Great weight and deference is due to such decisions, and every man that

(6) Art. 21st of the Church of England.



finds his own thoughts differ from them, ought to examine the matter over again with much attention and care, freeing himself all he can from prejudice and obstinacy, with a just distrust of his own understanding, and an humble respect to the judgment of his superiors. This is due to the consideration of peace and union, and to that authority which the Church has to maintain it; but if, after all possible methods of inquiry, a man cannot master his thoughts, or make them agree with the public decisions, his conscience is not under bonds, since this authority is not absolute, nor grounded upon a promise of infallibility.”(7) 3. To silence within its own pale the preaching of all doctrines contrary to the received standards. On this every Church has a right to insist which sincerely believes that contrary doctrines to its own are fundamental or dangerous errors, and which is thereby bound both to keep its members from their contamination, and also to preserve them from those distractions and controversies to which the preaching of diverse doctrines by its Ministers would inevitably lead. Nor is there any thing in the exercise of this authority contrary to Christian liberty, since the members of any communion, and especially the Ministers, know beforehand the terms of fellowship with the Churches whose confessions of faith are thus made public; and because also, where conscience is unfettered by public law, they are neither prevented from enjoying their own opinions in peace, nor from propagating them in other assemblies.

The second end is, the forming of such *regulations* for the conduct of its Ministers, Officers, and Members, as shall establish a common order for worship; facilitate the management of the affairs of the community, spiritual, economical, and financial; and give a right direction to the general conduct of the whole society. This in technical language is called *potestas διατακτική*, and consists in making *canons*, or *rules*, for those particular matters which are not provided for in detail by the directions of Scripture. This power also, like the former, has been carried to a culpable excess in many Churches, so as to fill them with superstition, and in many respects to introduce an onerous system of observances, like that of Judaism, the yoke from which the Gospel has set us free. The simplicity of Christianity has thus been often destroyed, and the “doctrines of men” set up “as commandments of God.” At the same time, there is a sound sense in which this power in a Church must be admitted, and a deference to it bound upon the members. For, when the laws of Christ are both rightly understood and cordially admitted, the application of them to particular cases is still neces-

sary ; many regulations also are dictated by inference and by analogies, and often appear to be required by the *spirit* of the Gospel, for which there is no provision in the letter of Scripture. The obligation of public worship, for instance, is plainly stated ; but the seasons of its observance, its frequency, and the mode in which it is to be conducted, must be matter of special regulation, in order that all things may be done “decently and in order.” The observance of the Sabbath is binding ; but particular rules guarding against such acts, as in the judgment of a Church, are violations of the law of the Sabbath, are often necessary to direct the judgment and consciences of the body of the people. Baptism is to be administered ; but the manner of this service may be prescribed by a Church, since the Scriptures have not determined it. So also as to the mode and the times of receiving the Lord’s Supper, in the same absence of inspired directions regulations must be agreed upon, that there may be, as nearly as edification requires, an undistracted uniformity of practice. Special festivals of commemoration and thanksgivings may also be appointed, as fit occasions for the inculcation of particular truths, and moral duties, and for the special excitement of grateful affections. For although they are not particularly prescribed in Scripture, they are in manifest accordance with its spirit, and are sanctioned by many of the examples which it exhibits. Days of fasting and humiliation, for the same reasons, may be the subject of appointment ; and beside the regular acts of public worship, private meetings of the members for mutual prayer and religious converse, may also be found necessary. To these may be added, various plans for the instruction of children, the visitation and relief of the sick, and the introduction of the Gospel into neglected neighbourhoods, and its promotion in foreign lands. A considerable number of other regulations touching order, contributions, the repressing of particular vices which may mark the spirit of the times, and the practice of particular duties, will also be found necessary.

The only legitimate ends, however, of all these directions and rules, are, the edification of the Church ; the preservation of its practical purity ; the establishment of an influential order and decorum in its services ; and the promotion of its usefulness to the world. The general principles by which they are to be controlled, are the *spirituality*, *simplicity*, and *practical character* of Christianity ; and the authority with which they are invested, is derived from piety, wisdom, and singleness of heart, in those who originate them, and from that docility and submissiveness of Christians to each other, which is enforced upon them in the New.

Testament. For although every Christian is exhorted to "try all things," to "search the Scriptures," and to exercise his best judgment, in matters which relate to doctrine, discipline, and practice, yet he is to do this in the spirit of a Christian; not with self-will, and self-confidence; not contemning the opinion and authority of others; not factiously and censoriously. This is his duty even where the most important subjects are in question; how much more then in things comparatively indifferent ought he to practise the Apostolic rule:—"Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder; yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility."

The third end of Church government is the infliction and removal of censures, a power (*potestas disciplina*) the abuse of which, and the extravagant lengths to which it has been carried, have led some wholly to deny it, or to treat it slightly; but which is nevertheless deposited with every scriptural Church. Even associations much less solemn and spiritual in their character, have the power to put away their members, and to receive again, upon certain conditions, those who offend against their rules; and if the offence which called forth this expulsion be of a moral nature, the censure of a whole society, inflicted after due examination, comes with much greater weight, and is a much greater reproach and misfortune to the person who falls under it, than that of a private individual. In the case of a Christian Church, however, the proceeding connects itself with a higher than human authority. The members have separated from the world, and have placed themselves under the laws of Christ. They stand in a special relation to him, so long as they are faithful; they are objects of his care and love, as members of his own body; and to them, as such, great and numerous promises are made. To preserve them in this state of fidelity, to guard them from errors of doctrine and viciousness of practice, and thus to prevent their separation from Christ, the Church with its ministry, its ordinances, and its discipline, was established. He who becomes unfaithful in opposition to the influence of those edifying and conservatory means, forfeits the favour of Christ, even before he is deservedly separated from the Church; but when he is separated, put away, denied communion with the Church, he loses also the benefit of all those peculiar means of grace and salvation, and of those special influences and promises which Christ bestows upon the Church. He is not only thrown back upon common society with shame, stigmatized as an "evil worker," by the solemn sentence of a religious tribunal; but becomes, so to speak, again a member of that incorporated and hostile society.



THE WORLD, against which the exclusive and penal sentences of the word of God are directed. Where the sentence of excision by a Church is erring or vicious, as it may be in some cases, it cannot affect an innocent individual; he would remain, notwithstanding the sentence of men, a member of Christ's invisible universal Church; but when it proceeds upon a just application of the laws of Christ, there can be no doubt of its ratification in heaven, although the door is left open to penitence and restoration.

In proportion, however, as a sober and serious Christian, having those views, wishes to keep up in his own mind, and in the minds of others, a proper sense of the weight and solemnity of Church censures when rightly administered, he will feel disgusted at those assumptions of control over the mercy and justice of God, which fallible men have in some Churches endeavoured to establish, and have too often exercised for the gratification of the worst passions. So because our Lord said to Peter, "I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven," and "whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven," which is also said Matt. xviii, 18, to all the Apostles, "it came to be understood that the sentence of excommunication, by its own intrinsic authority, condemned to eternal punishment; that the excommunicated person could not be delivered from this condemnation, unless the Church gave him absolution; and that the Church had the power of absolving him upon the private confession of his fault, either by prescribing to him certain acts of penance, and works of charity, the performance of which was considered as a satisfaction for the sin which he had committed, or by applying to him the merits of some other person. And as in the progress of corruption, the whole power of the Church was supposed to be lodged in the Pope, there flowed from him, at his pleasure, indulgences or remissions of some parts of the penance, absolutions, and pardons, the possession of which was represented to Christians as essential to salvation, and the sale of which formed a most gainful traffic."

As to the passage respecting the gift of the KEYS of the kingdom of heaven to Peter, from which these views affect to be derived, it is most naturally explained by the very apposite and obviously explanatory fact, that this Apostle was the first preacher of the Gospel dispensation in its perfected form, both to the Jews at the day of Pentecost, and afterwards to the Gentiles. Bishop Horsley applies it only to the latter of these events, to which indeed it may principally, but not exclusively, refer.

"St. Peter's custody of the keys was a temporary, not a per-

petual authority: its object was not individuals, but the whole human race. The kingdom of heaven upon earth is the true Church of God. It is now therefore the Christian Church: formerly the Jewish Church was that kingdom. The true Church is represented in this text, as in many passages of Holy Writ, under the image of a walled city, to be entered only at the gates. Under the Mosaic economy these gates were shut, and particular persons only could obtain admittance,—Israelites by birth, or by legal incorporation. The locks of these gates were the rites of the Mosaic law, which obstructed the entrance of aliens. But, after our Lord's ascension, and the descent of the Holy Ghost, the keys of the city were given to St. Peter, by that vision which taught him, and authorized him to teach others, that all distinctions of one nation from another were at an end. By virtue of this special commission, the great Apostle applied the key, pushed back the bolt of the lock, and threw the gates of the city open for the admission of the whole Gentile world, in the instance of Cornelius and his family.”(8)

When the same learned Prelate would also refer the binding and loosing power mentioned in the above texts exclusively to Peter, he forgets that in the passage above referred to, Matt. xviii, 18, it is given to all the Apostles, “Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” These expressions manifestly refer to the authoritative declaration of any thing to be obligatory, and its infraction to be sinful, and therefore subject to punishment, or the contrary; and the passage receives sufficient illustration from the words of our Lord to his Apostles, after his resurrection, when after breathing upon them he said, “Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted to them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained,” John xx, 22, 23. To qualify them for this authoritative declaration of what was *obligatory* upon men, or otherwise; and of the *terms* upon which sins are “remitted,” and the circumstances under which they are “retained;” they previously received the Holy Ghost,—a sufficient proof that this power was connected with the plenary inspiration of the Apostles; and beyond those inspired men it could not extend, unless equally strong miraculous evidence of the same degree of inspiration were afforded by any others. The manner also in which the Apostles exercised this power elucidates the subject. We have no instance at all of their forgiving the sins of

any individuals ; they merely *proclaimed* the terms of pardon. And we have no instance of their “retaining” the sins of any one, except by *declaring* them condemned by the laws of the Gospel, of which they were the preachers. They authoritatively explain in their writings the terms of forgiveness ; they state as to duty what is obligatory, and what is not obligatory, upon Christians ; they pronounce sinners of various kinds, impenitent and unbelieving, to be under God’s wrath ; and they declare certain apostates to be put beyond forgiveness by their own act, not by Apostolic excommunication ; and thus they bind and loose, remit sins and retain them. The meaning of these passages is in this manner explained by the practice of the Apostles themselves, and we may also see the reason why in Matthew xviii, a similar declaration stands connected with the censures of a *Church* : “Moreover, if thy brother trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone ; if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the Church ; but if he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and as a publican ; verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”

That here there may be a reference to a provision made among the Jews for settling questions of accusation and dispute by the Elders of their synagogues, is probable ; but it is also clear that our Lord looked forward to the establishment of his own Church, which was to displace the synagogue ; and that there might be infallible rules to guide that Church in its judgment on moral cases, he turns to the disciples, to whom the discourse is addressed, and says to them, “Whatsoever YE,” not the *Church*, “shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever YE shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” Of the disciples then present the subsequent history leads us to conclude, that he principally meant that the Apostles should be endued with this power, and that they were to be the inspired persons who were to furnish “the Church” with infallible rules of judgment, in all such cases of dispute and accusation. When, therefore, any Church rightly interprets these Apostolic rules, and rightly applies them to particular cases, it then exercises a discipline which is not only approved, but is also confirmed, in heaven by the concurring dispensations of God, who respects his own inspirations in his Apostles. The whole



shows the careful and solemn manner in which all such investigations are to be conducted, and the serious effect of them. It is by the admonishing and putting away of offenders, that the Church bears its testimony against all sin before the world ; and it is thus that she maintains a salutary influence over her members, by the well-grounded fear of those censures which, when scripturally administered, are sanctioned by Christ its Head ; and which, when they extend to excision from the body, and no error of judgment, or sinister intention, vitiates the proceeding, separates the offenders from that special grace of Christ which is promised to the faithful collected into a Church state,—a loss, an evil, and a danger, which nothing but repentance, humiliation, and a return to God and his people, can repair. For it is to be observed, that this part of discipline is an ordinance of Christ, not only for the maintenance of the character of his Churches, and the preservation of their influence in the world ; but for the spiritual benefit of the offenders themselves. To this effect are the words of the Apostle Paul as to the immoral Corinthian,—“to deliver such a one to Satan, for the destruction of *the flesh*,” the dominion of his bodily appetites, “that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.” The practice of many of the ancient Churches was, in this respect, rigid ; in several of the circumstances far too much so ; and thus it assumed a severity much more appalling than in the Apostolic times. It shows, however, how deeply the necessity of maintaining moral discipline was felt among them, and in substance, though not in every part of the mode, is worthy of remembrance. “When disciples of Christ who had dishonoured his religion by committing any gross immorality, or by relapsing into idolatry, were cut off from the Church by the sentence of excommunication ; they were kept, often for years, in a state of penance, however desirous to be re-admitted. They made a public confession of their faith, accompanied with the most humiliating expressions of grief. For some time they stood without the doors, while the Christians were employed in worship. Afterwards they were allowed to enter ; then to stand during a part of the service ; then to remain during the whole : but they were not permitted to partake of the Lord’s Supper, till a formal absolution was pronounced by the Church. The time of the penance was sometimes shortened, when the anguish of their mind, or any occasional distress of body, threatened the danger of their dying in that condition, or when those who were then suffering persecution, or other deserving members of the Church, interceded for them, and became, by this intercession, in some measure, sureties for their future good behaviour. The

duration of the penance, the acts required while it continued, and the manner of the absolution, varied at different times. The matter was, from its nature, subject to much abuse ; it was often taken under the cognizance of ancient Councils ; and a great part of their canons was employed in regulating the exercise of discipline.”(9)

In concluding this Chapter, it may be observed, that however difficult it may be, in some cases, to adjust modes of Church government, so that, in the view of all, the principles of the New Testament may be fully recognised, and the ends for which Churches are collected may be effectually accomplished, this labour will always be greatly smoothed, by a steady regard, on each side, to *duties* as well as to *rights*. These are equally imperative upon Ministers, upon subordinate officers, and upon the private members of every Church. Charity, candour, humility, public spirit, zeal, a forgiving spirit, and the desire, the strong desire, of unity and harmony, ought to pervade all, as well as a constant remembrance of the great and solemn truth, that Christ is the *Judge*, as well as the *Saviour*, of his Churches. Whilst the people are docile ; obedient to the word of exhortation ; willing to submit, “in the Lord,” to those who “preside over them,” and are charged to exercise Christ’s discipline ; and whilst Ministers are “gentle among them,” after the example of St. Paul,—a gentleness, however, which, in his case, winked at no evil, and kept back no truth, and compromised no principle, and spared no obstinate and incurable offender,—whilst they feed the flock of Christ with sound doctrine, and are intent upon their edification, watching over them “as they that must give account,” and study, live, and labour, for no other ends, than to present that part of the Church committed to their care “perfect in Christ Jesus ;” every Church will fall as it were naturally and without effort into its proper “order.” Pure and undefiled religion in Churches, like the first poetry, creates those subordinate rules by which it is, afterwards, guarded and governed ; and the best canons of both are those which are dictated by the fresh and primitive effusions of their own inspiration.

## CHAPTER II.

## INSTITUTIONS OF CHRISTIANITY.—THE SACRAMENTS.

THE number of Sacraments is held by all Protestants to be but two,—*Baptism*, and the *Lord's Supper*; because they find no other instituted in the New Testament, or practised in the early Church. The superstition of the Church of Rome has added no fewer than five to the number,—*Confirmation*, *Penance*, *Orders*, *Matrimony*, and *Extreme Unction*.

The word used by the Greek Fathers for sacrament was *μυστήριον*. In the New Testament this word always means, as Campbell has showed, either a secret,—something unknown till revealed; or the spiritual meaning of some emblem or type. In both these senses it is rendered *sacramentum* in the Vulgate translation, which shows that the latter word was formerly used in a large signification. As the Greek term was employed in the New Testament to express the hidden meaning of an external symbol, as in Revelation i, 20, “the *mystery* of the seven stars,” it was naturally applied by early Christians to the symbolical rite of the Lord's Supper; and as some of the most sacred and retired parts of the ancient heathen worship were called *mysteries*, from which all but the initiated were excluded, the use of the same term to designate that most sacred act of Christian worship, which was strictly confined to the approved members of the Church, was probably thought peculiarly appropriate. The Latin word *sacramentum*, in its largest sense, may signify a sacred ceremony; and is the appellation, also, of the military oath of fidelity, taken by the Roman soldiers. For both these reasons, probably, the term *sacrament* was adopted by the Latin Christians. For the first, because of the peculiar sacredness of the Lord's Supper; and for the second, because of that engagement to be faithful to the commands of Christ, their heavenly Leader, which was implied in this ordinance, and impressed upon them by so sacred a solemnity. It was, perhaps, from the designation of this ordinance, by the term *sacramentum*, by the Christians whom Pliny examined as to their faith and modes of worship, that he thus expresses himself in his letter to the Emperor Trajan:—“From their affirmations I learned that the sum of all their offence, call it fault or error, was, that on a day fixed they used to assemble before sunrise, and sing



together, in alternate responses, hymns to Christ, as a Deity; binding themselves *by the solemn engagements of an oath*, not to commit any manner of wickedness," &c. The term *sacrament* was also at an early period given to Baptism, as well as to the Supper of the Lord, and is now confined among Protestants to these two ordinances only. The distinction between sacraments, and other religious rites, is well stated by Burnet:—(1)

"This difference is to be put between sacraments and other ritual actions; that whereas other rites are badges and distinctions by which Christians are known, a sacrament is more than a bare matter of form; as in the Old Testament, circumcision and propitiatory sacrifices were things of a different nature and order from all the other ritual precepts concerning their cleansings, the distinctions of days, places, and meats. These were, indeed, precepts given them of God; but they were not federal acts of renewing the covenant, or reconciling themselves to God. By circumcision they received the seal of the covenant, and were brought under the obligation of the whole law; they were made by it debtors to it; and when by their sins they had provoked God's wrath, they were reconciled to him by their sacrifices, with which atonement was made, and so their sins were forgiven them; the nature and end of those was, to be federal acts, in the offering of which the Jews kept to their part of the covenant, and in the accepting of which God maintained it on his part; so we see a plain difference between these and a mere rite, which, though commanded, yet must pass only for the badge of a profession, as the doing of it is an act of obedience to a Divine law. Now, in the new dispensation, though our Saviour has eased us of that *law of ordinances*, that *grievous yoke*, and those *beggarly elements*, which were laid upon the Jews; yet since we are still in the body subject to our senses, and to sensible things, he has appointed some federal actions to be both the visible stipulations and professions of our Christianity, and the conveyancers to us of the blessings of the Gospel."

It is this view of the two sacraments, as federal acts, which sweeps away the five superstitious additions that the temerity of the Church of Rome has dared to elevate to the same rank of sacredness and importance.

As it is usual among men to confirm covenants by visible and solemn forms, and has been so from the most ancient times, so when Almighty God was pleased to enter into covenant engage-

ments with men, he condescended to the same methods of affording, on his part, sensible assurances of his fidelity, and to require the same from them. Thus, circumcision was the sign and seal of the covenant with Abraham; and when the great covenant of grace was made in the Son of God with all nations, it was agreeable to this analogy to expect that he would institute some constantly-recurring visible sign, in confirmation of his mercy to us, which should encourage our reliance upon his promises, and have the force of a perpetual renewal of the covenant between the parties. Such is manifestly the character and ends both of the institution of Baptism and the Lord's Supper; but as to the five additional sacraments of the Church of Rome, "they have not any visible sign or ceremony ordained of God," (2) and they stand in no direct connexion with any covenant engagement entered into by him with his creatures. *Confirmation* rests on no scriptural authority at all. *Penance*, if it mean any thing more than repentance, is equally unsanctioned by Scripture; and if it mean "repentance toward God," it is no more a sacrament than faith. *Orders*, or the ordination of Ministers, is an Apostolic command, but has in it no greater indication of a sacramental act than any other such command,—say the excommunication of obstinate sinners from the Church, which, with just as good a reason, might be elevated into a sacrament. *Marriage* appears to have been made by the Papists a sacrament for this curious reason, that the Apostle Paul, when speaking of the love and union of husband and wife, and taking occasion from that to allude to the love of Christ to his Church, says, "This is a great *mystery*," which the Vulgate version translates, "*SACRAMENTUM hoc magnum est*:" Thus they confound the large and the restricted sense of the word sacrament, and forget that the true "mystery" spoken of by the Apostle, lies not in marriage, but in the union of Christ with his people,—“This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the Church.” If, however, the use of the word "mystery" in this passage by St. Paul, were sufficient to prove marriage a sacrament, then the calling of the Gentiles, as Beza observes, might be the eighth sacrament, since St. Paul terms that "a mystery," Eph. i, 9, which the Vulgate, in like manner, translates by "*sacramentum*." The last of their sacraments is *Extreme Unction*, of which it is enough to say, that it is no where prescribed in Scripture; and if it were, has clearly nothing in it of a sacramental character. The passage in St. James's Epistle to which they refer, cannot serve them at all;

(2) Article 25th of the Church of England.

for the Romanists use extreme unction only when all hope of recovery is past, whereas the prayers and the anointing mentioned by St. James were resorted to in order to a miraculous cure, for life, and not for death. With them, therefore, extreme unction is called "the sacrament of the dying."

Of the nature of sacraments there are three leading views.

The first is that taken by the Church of Rome.

According to the doctrine of this Church, the sacraments contain the grace they signify, and confer grace, *ex opere operato*, by the work itself, upon such as do not put an obstruction by mortal sin. "For these sensible and natural things," it is declared, "work by the almighty power of God in the sacraments what they could not do by their own power." Nor is any more necessary to this effect, than that the Priests, "who make and consecrate the sacraments, have an *intention* of doing what the Church doth, and doth intend to do." (3) According therefore to this doctrine, the matter of the sacrament derives from the action of the Priest, in pronouncing certain words, a Divine virtue, provided it be the intention of the Priest to give to that matter such a Divine virtue, and this grace is conveyed to the soul of every person who receives it. Nor is it required of the person receiving a sacrament, that he should exercise any good disposition, or possess faith; for such is conceived to be the *physical virtue* of a sacrament, that, except when opposed by the obstacle of a mortal sin, the act of receiving it is alone sufficient for the experience of its efficacy. This is so capital an article of faith with the Romish Church, that the Council of Trent anathematizes all who deny that grace is not conferred by the sacraments from the act itself of receiving them, and affirm that faith only in the Divine promises is sufficient to the obtaining of grace,—"*Se quis dixerit, per ipsa nova legis sacramenta, ex opere operato, non conferri gratiam, sed solum fidem divinæ promissionis ad gratiam consequendam sufficere, anathema sit.*" (4) It is on this ground also, that the members of that Church argue the superiority of the sacraments of the New Testament to those of the Old; the latter having been effectual only *ex opere operantis*, from the piety and faith of the persons receiving them, whilst the former confer grace *ex opere operato*, from their own intrinsic virtue, and an immediate physical influence upon the mind of the receiver.

The first great objection to this statement is, that it has even no pretence of authority from Scripture, and grounds itself wholly upon the alleged traditions of the Church of Rome, which, in fact,

(3) *Conc. Trid. Can. 11.*

(4) *Conc. Trid. Sess. vii, Can. 8.*



are just what successive inventors of superstitious practices have thought proper to make them. The second is, that it is decidedly anti-scriptural; for as the only true notion of a sacrament is, that it is the sign and seal of a covenant; and as the saving benefits of the covenant of grace are made expressly to depend upon a true faith; the condition of grace being made by the Church of Rome the act of receiving a sacrament independent of true faith, she impudently rejects the great condition of salvation as laid down in God's word, and sets up in its place another of an opposite kind by mere human authority. The third is, that it debases an ordinance of God from a rational service into a mere charm, disconnected with every mental exercise, and working its effect physically, and not morally. The fourth is its licentious tendency; for as a very large class of sins is by the Romish Church allowed to be venial, and nothing but a mortal sin can prevent the recipient of the sacrament from receiving the grace of God; men may live in the practice of all these venial offences, and consequently in an unrenewed habit of soul, and yet be assured of the Divine favour, and of eternal salvation; thus again boldly contradicting the whole tenor of the New Testament. Finally, whatever privileges the sacraments are designed to confer, all of them are made by this doctrine to depend, not upon the state of the receiver's mind, but upon the "intention" of the administrator, who, if not intending to impart the physical virtue to the elements, renders the sacrament of no avail to the recipient, although he performs all the external acts of the ceremony.

The opposite opinion to this gross and unholy doctrine is that maintained by Socinus, and adopted generally by his followers: to which also the notions of some orthodox Protestants have too carelessly leaned. The view taken on the subject of the sacraments by such persons is, that they differ not *essentially* from other rites and ceremonies of religion; but that their peculiarity consists in their emblematic character, under which they represent what is spiritual and invisible, and are memorials of past events. Their sole use therefore is to cherish pious sentiments, by leading the mind to such meditations as are adapted to excite them. Some also add, that they are the badges of a Christian profession, and the instituted means by which Christians testify their faith in Christ.

The fault of the Popish opinion is superstitious *excess*; the fault of the latter scheme is that of *defect*. The sacraments are emblematical; they are adapted to excite pious sentiments; they are memorials, at least the Lord's Supper bears this character; they

are badges of profession ; they are the appointed means for declaring our faith in Christ ; and so far is this view superior to the Popish doctrine, that it elevates the sacraments from the base and degrading character of a charm and incantation, to that of a spiritual and reasonable service, and instead of making them substitutes for faith and good works, renders them subservient to both.

But if the sacraments are federal rites, that is, if they are covenant transactions, they must have a more extensive and a deeper import than this view of the subject conveys. If circumcision was “a token,” and “a seal” of the covenant by which God engaged to justify men by faith, then, as we shall subsequently show, since Christian baptism came in its place, it has precisely the same office ; if the passover was a sign, a pledge or seal, and subsequently a memorial, then these characters will belong to the Lord’s Supper ; the relation of which to the “New Testament,” or COVENANT, “in the blood” of our Saviour, is expressly stated by himself. What is the import of the terms *Sign* and *Seal*, will be hereafter considered ; but it is enough here to suggest them, to show that the second opinion above stated loses sight of these peculiarities, and is therefore defective.

The third opinion may be stated in the words of the formularies of several Protestant Churches.

The *Heidelberg* Catechism has the following question and reply :—

“What are the sacraments ?”

“They are holy visible *signs* and *seals* ordained by God for this end, that He may more fully *declare* and *seal* by them the promise of his Gospel unto us ; to wit, that not only unto all believers in general, but unto each of them in particular, he freely giveth remission of sins and life eternal, upon the account of that only sacrifice of Christ, which he accomplished upon the cross.”

The Church of England, in her Twenty-fifth Article, thus expresses herself :—

“Sacraments ordained of Christ be not only badges or tokens of Christian men’s profession, but rather they be sure witnesses, and effectual signs of grace, and God’s will towards us, by the which he doth work invisibly in us, and doth not only quicken, but also strengthen and confirm our faith in him.”

The Church of Scotland, in the one hundred and sixty-second Question of her Larger Catechism, asks,

“What is a sacrament ?” and replies,

“A sacrament is a holy ordinance, instituted by Christ in his Church, to signify, seal, and exhibit, unto those within the cove-

nant of grace, the benefits of his mediation ; to strengthen and increase their faith, and all other graces ; to oblige them to obedience ; to testify and cherish their love and communion one with another ; and to distinguish them from those that are without."

In all these descriptions of a sacrament, terms are employed of just and weighty meaning, which will subsequently require notice. Generally it may, however, here be observed, that they all assume that there is in this ordinance an express institution of God ; that there is this essential difference between them and every other symbolical ceremony, that they are seals as well as signs, that is, that they afford pledges on the part of God of grace and salvation ; that as a covenant has two parties, our external acts in receiving the sacraments are indications of certain states and dispositions of our mind with regard to God's covenant, without which none can have a personal participation in its benefits, and so the sacrament is useless where these are not found ; that there are words of institution ; and a promise also by which the sign and the thing signified are connected together.

The covenant of which they are the seals, is that called by the *Heidelberg Catechism*, "the promise of the Gospel ;" the import of which is, that God giveth freely to every one that believeth remission of sins, with all spiritual blessings, and "life eternal, upon the account of that only sacrifice of Christ which he accomplished upon the cross."

As SIGNS, they are visible and symbolical expositions of what the Article of the Church of England, above quoted, calls "the grace of God," and his "will," that is, his "good will towards us ;" or, according to the Church of Scotland, "significations of the benefits of his mediation ;" that is, they exhibit to the senses, under appropriate emblems, the same benefits as are exhibited in another form in the doctrines and promises of the word of God, so that "the eye may affect and instruct the heart," and that for the strong incitement of our faith, our desire, and our gratitude. It ought nevertheless to be remembered that they are not signs merely of the grace of God to us, but of our obligations to him ; obligations, however, still flowing from the same grace.

They are also SEALS. A seal is a confirming sign, or, according to theological language, there is in a sacrament a *signum significans*, and a *signum confirmans* ; the former of which is said, *significare*, to notify or to declare ; the latter *obsignare*, to set one's seal to, to witness. As, therefore, the sacraments, when considered as signs, contain a declaration of the same doctrines and promises which the written word of God exhibits, but addressed by a signi-



ficant emblem to the senses ; so also as *seals*, or pledges, they confirm the same promises which are assured to us by God's own truth and faithfulness in his word, (which is the main ground of all affiance in his mercy,) and by his indwelling Spirit by which we are "sealed," and have in our hearts "the earnest" of our heavenly inheritance. This is done by an external and visible institution ; so that God has added these ordinances to the promises of his word, not only to bring his merciful purpose towards us in Christ to mind, but constantly to assure us that those who believe in him shall be and are made partakers of his grace. These ordinances are a pledge to them, that Christ and his benefits are theirs, whilst they are required, at the same time, by faith, as well as by the visible sign, to signify their compliance with his covenant, which may be called "setting to their seal." "The sacraments are God's seals, as they are ordinances given by him for the confirmation of our faith that he would be our covenant God ; and they are our seals, or we set our seal thereunto, when we visibly profess that we give up ourselves to him to be his people, and, in the exercise of a true faith, look to be partakers of the benefits which Christ hath purchased, according to the terms of the covenant." (5)

The passage quoted from the Heidelberg Catechism has a clause which is of great importance in explaining the design of the sacraments. They are "visible signs and seals ordained by God for this end, that He may more fully declare, and seal by them the promise of his Gospel unto us, to wit, that not only unto all *believers in general*, but to *each of them in particular*, he freely giveth remission of sins and life eternal, upon the account of that only sacrifice of Christ, which he accomplished upon the cross." For it is to be remarked that the administration is to particular individuals separately, both in Baptism and the Lord's Supper,— "Take, eat," "drink ye all of this ;" so that the institution of the sign and seal of the covenant, and the acceptance of this sign and seal is a solemn transaction between God and each individual. From which it follows, that to *every one* to whom the sign is exhibited, a seal and pledge of the invisible grace is also given ; and every individual who draws near with a true heart and full assurance of faith, does in *his own* person enter into God's covenant, and to him in particular that covenant stands firm. He renews it also in every sacramental act, the repetition of which is appointed ; and being authorized by a Divine and standing institution thus

to put in his claim to the full grace of the covenant, he receives thereby continual assurances of the love and faithfulness of a God who changes not ; but exhibits the *same* signs and pledges of the *same* covenant of grace, to the constant acceptance of every individual believer throughout all the ages of his Church, which is charged with the ministration of these sacred symbols of his mercy to mankind. This is an important and most encouraging circumstance.

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### CHAPTER III.

#### THE INSTITUTIONS OF THE CHURCH.—BAPTISM.

THE *obligation* of baptism rests upon the example of our Lord, who, by his disciples, baptized many that by his discourses and miracles were brought to profess faith in him as the Messiah ;—upon his solemn command to his Apostles after his resurrection, “Go and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost ;”(6)—and upon the practice of the Apostles themselves, who thus showed that they did not understand baptism, like our Quakers, in a mystical sense. Thus St. Peter, in his sermon upon the day of Pentecost, exhorts, “Repent and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the Holy Ghost.”(7)

As to this sacrament, which has occasioned endless and various controversies, three things require examination,—its NATURE ; its SUBJECTS ; and its MODE.

I. ITS NATURE.—The Romanists, agreeably to their superstitious opinion as to the efficacy of sacraments, consider baptism administered by a Priest having a good intention, as *of itself* applying the merits of Christ to the person baptized. According to them, baptism is absolutely necessary to salvation, and they therefore admit its validity when administered to a dying child by any person present, should there be no Priest at hand. From this view of its efficacy arises their distinction between sins committed before and after baptism. The hereditary corruption of our nature, and all actual sins committed before baptism, are said to be entirely removed by it ; so that if the most abandoned person were to receive it for the first time in the article of death, all his sins would be washed away. But all sins committed after baptism, and the infusion of

(6) Matt. xxviii, 30.

(7) Acts ii, 38.

that grace which is conveyed by the sacrament, must be expiated by penance. In this notion of regeneration, or the washing away of original sin by baptism, the Roman Church followed Augustine; but as he was a predestinarian, he was obliged to invent a distinction between those who are regenerated, and those who are predestinated to eternal life; so that, according to him, although all the baptized are freed from that corruption which is entailed upon mankind by Adam's lapse, and experience a renovation of mind, none continue to walk in that state but the predestinated. The Lutheran Church also places the efficacy of this sacrament in regeneration, by which faith is actually conveyed to the soul of an infant. The Church of England in her baptismal services has not departed entirely from the terms used by the Romish Church from which she separated. She speaks of those who are by nature "born in sin," being made by baptism "the children of grace," which are, however, words of equivocal import; and she gives thanks to God "that it hath pleased him to regenerate this infant with his Holy Spirit," probably using the term regeneration in the same large sense as several of the ancient Fathers, and not in its modern theological interpretation, which is more strict. However this be, a controversy has long existed in the English Church as to the real opinion of her founders on this point; one part of the Clergy holding the doctrine of baptismal regeneration, and the absolute necessity of baptism unto salvation; the other taking different views not only of the doctrine of Scripture, but also of the import of various expressions found in the Articles, Catechisms, and Offices of the Church itself. The Quakers view baptism only as spiritual, and thus reject the rite altogether, as one of the "beggarly elements" of former dispensations; whilst the Socinians regard it as a mere mode of professing the religion of Christ. Some of them indeed consider it as calculated to produce a moral effect upon those who submit to it, or who witness its administration; whilst others think it so entirely a ceremony of induction into the society of Christians from Judaism and Paganism, as to be necessary only when such conversions take place, so that it might be wholly laid aside in Christian nations.

We have called baptism a federal transaction; an initiation into, and acceptance of, the covenant of grace, required of us by Christ as a visible expression and act of that faith in Him which He has made a condition of that salvation. It is a point, however, of so much importance to establish the covenant character of this ordinance, and so much of the controversy as to the proper subjects of baptism depends upon it, that we may consider it somewhat at large.



That the covenant with Abraham, of which circumcision was made the sign and seal,(8) was the general covenant of grace, and not wholly, or even chiefly, a political and national covenant, may be satisfactorily established.

The first engagement in it was, that God would “greatly bless” Abraham; which promise, although it comprehended temporal blessings, referred, as we learn from St. Paul, more fully to the blessing of his justification by the imputation of his faith for righteousness, with all the spiritual advantages consequent upon the relation which was thus established between him and God, in time and eternity. The second promise in the covenant was, that he should be “the Father of many nations,” which we are also taught by St. Paul to interpret more with reference to his spiritual seed, the followers of that faith whereof cometh justification, than to his natural descendants. “That the promise might be sure to all the seed, not only to that which is by the law, but to that also which is by *the faith* of Abraham, who is the father of *us all*,”—of all believing Gentiles as well as Jews. The third stipulation in God’s covenant with the patriarch, was the gift to Abraham and to his seed of “the land of Canaan,” in which the temporal promise was manifestly but the type of the higher promise of a heavenly inheritance. Hence St. Paul says, “By *faith* he sojourned in the land of promise, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise;” but this “faith” did not respect the fulfilment of the temporal promise; for St. Paul adds, “they looked for a city which had foundations, whose builder and maker is God.”(9) The next promise was, that God would always be “a God to Abraham, and to his seed after him,” a promise which is connected with the highest spiritual blessings, such as the remission of sins, and the sanctification of our nature, as well as with a visible Church state. It is even used to express the felicitous state of the Church in heaven, Rev. xxi, 3. The final engagement in the Abrahamic covenant, was, that in Abraham’s “seed, all the nations of the earth should be blessed;” and this blessing, we are expressly taught by St. Paul, was nothing less than the justification of all nations, that is, of all believers in all nations, by faith in Christ:—“And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Heathen by faith, preached before the Gospel to Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they who are of faith, are blessed with believing Abraham,” they receive the same blessing, justification, by the same means, faith, Gal. iii, 8, 9.

(8) Gen. xvii, 7-14.

(9) Heb. xi, 19.

This covenant with Abraham, therefore, although it respected a natural seed, Isaac, from whom a numerous progeny was to spring ; and an earthly inheritance provided for this issue, the land of Canaan ; and a special covenant relation with the descendants of Isaac, through the line of Jacob, to whom Jehovah was to be “a God,” visibly and specially, and they a visible and “peculiar people ;” yet was, under all these temporal, earthly, and external advantages, but a higher and spiritual grace embodying itself under these circumstances, as types of a dispensation of salvation and eternal life, to all who should follow the faith of Abraham, whose justification before God was the pattern of the justification of every man, whether Jew or Gentile, in all ages.

Now, of this covenant, in its spiritual as well as in its temporal provisions, circumcision was most certainly the sacrament, that is, the “sign” and the “seal ;” for St. Paul thus explains the case : “And he received the SIGN of circumcision, a SEAL of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised.” And as this rite was enjoined upon Abraham’s posterity, so that every “uncircumcised man child whose flesh of his foreskin was not circumcised on the eighth day,” was to be “cut off from his people,” by the special judgment of God, and that because “he had broken God’s covenant,” (1) it therefore follows that this rite was a constant *publication* of God’s covenant of grace among the descendants of Abraham, and its repetition a continual *confirmation* of that covenant, on the part of God, to all practising it in that faith of which it was the ostensible expression.

As the covenant of grace made with Abraham was bound up with temporal promises and privileges, so circumcision was a sign and seal of the covenant in both its parts,—its spiritual and its temporal, its superior and inferior, provisions. The spiritual promises of the covenant continued unrestricted to all the descendants of Abraham, whether by Isaac or by Ishmael ; and still lower down, to the descendants of Esau as well as to those of Jacob. Circumcision was practised among them all by virtue of its Divine institution at first ; and was extended to their foreign servants, and to proselytes, as well as to their children ; and wherever the sign of the covenant of grace was by Divine appointment, there it was as a *seal* of that covenant, to all who believingly used it ; for we read of no restriction of its spiritual blessings, that is, its saving engagements, to one line of descent from Abraham only. But over the *temporal* branch of the covenant, and the *external* religious

(1) Gen. xvii, 14.

privileges arising out of it, God exercised a rightful sovereignty, and expressly restricted them first to the line of Isaac, and then to that of Jacob, with whose descendants he entered into special covenant by the ministry of Moses. The temporal blessings and external privileges comprised under general expressions in the covenant with Abraham, were explained and enlarged under that of Moses, whilst the spiritual blessings remained unrestricted as before. This was probably the reason why circumcision was re-enacted under the law of Moses. It was a confirmation of the temporal blessings of the Abrahamic covenant, now, by a covenant of peculiarity, made over to them, whilst it was still recognised as a consuetudinary rite which had descended to them from their fathers, and as the sign and seal of the covenant of grace, made with Abraham and with all his descendants without exception. This double reference of circumcision, both to the authority of Moses and to that of the patriarchs, is found in the words of our Lord, John vii, 22; "Moses therefore gave unto you circumcision, not because it is of Moses, but of the fathers;" or, as it is better translated by Campbell, "Moses instituted circumcision amongst you, (not that it is from Moses, but from the patriarchs,) and ye circumcise on the Sabbath. If on the Sabbath a child receive circumcision, that the *law of Moses* may not be violated," &c.

From these observations, the controversy in the Apostolic Churches respecting circumcision will derive much elucidation.

The covenant with Abraham prescribed circumcision as an act of faith in its promises, and a pledge [to perform its conditions] [on the part of his descendants.] But the object on which this faith rested, was "the Seed of Abraham," in whom the nations of the earth were to be blessed: which Seed, says St. Paul, "is Christ;"—Christ as promised, not yet come. When the Christ had come, so as fully to enter upon his redeeming offices, he could no longer be the object of faith, as still to come; and this leading promise of the covenant being accomplished, the sign and seal of it vanished away. Nor could circumcision be continued in *this view*, by any, without an implied denial that Jesus was the Christ, the expected Seed of Abraham. Circumcision also as an institution of Moses, who continued it as the sign and seal of the Abrahamic covenant both in its spiritual and temporal provisions, but with respect to the latter made it also the sign and seal of the restriction of its temporal blessings and peculiar religious privileges to the descendants of Israel, was terminated by the entrance of our Lord upon his office of Mediator, in which office all nations were to be blessed in him. The Mosaic edition of the covenant



not only guaranteed the land of Canaan, but the peculiarity of the Israelites, as the people and visible Church of God to the exclusion of others, except by proselytism. But when our Lord commanded the Gospel to be preached to "all nations," and opened the gates of the "common salvation" to all, whether Gentiles or Jews, circumcision, as the sign of a covenant of peculiarity and religious distinction, was done away also. It had not only no reason remaining, but the continuance of the rite involved the recognition of exclusive privileges which had been terminated by Christ.

This will explain the views of the Apostle Paul on this great question. He declares that in Christ there is neither circumcision nor uncircumcision; that neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but "faith that worketh by love;" faith in the Seed of Abraham already come and already engaged in his mediatorial and redeeming work; faith, by virtue of which the Gentiles came into the Church of Christ on the same terms as the Jews themselves, and were justified and saved. The doctrine of the non-necessity of circumcision, he applies to the Jews as well as to the Gentiles, although he specially resists the attempts of the Judaizers to impose this rite upon the Gentile converts; in which he was supported by the decision of the Holy Spirit when the appeal upon this question was made to "the Apostles and Elders at Jerusalem," from the Church at Antioch. At the same time it is clear that he takes two different views of the practice of circumcision, as it was continued among many of the first Christians. The first is that strong one which is expressed in Gal. v, 2-4, "Behold I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, *Christ shall profit you nothing*; for I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. Christ is become of *no effect* unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law, ye are fallen from grace." The second is that milder view which he himself must have had when he circumcised Timothy to render him more acceptable to the Jews; and which also appears to have led him to abstain from all allusion to this practice when writing his Epistle to the believing Hebrews, although many, perhaps most of them, continued to circumcise their children, as did the Jewish Christians for a long time afterwards. These different views of circumcision, held by the same person, may be explained by considering the different principles on which circumcision might be practised after it had become an obsolete ordinance.

1. It might be taken in the simple view of its first institution, as the sign and seal of the Abrahamic covenant; and then it was to be condemned as involving a denial that Abraham's Seed, the

Christ, had already come, since, upon his coming, every old covenant gave place to the new covenant introduced by him.

2. It might be practised and enjoined as the sign and seal of the Mosaic covenant, which was still the Abrahamic covenant with its spiritual blessings, but with restriction of its temporal promises and special ecclesiastical privileges to the line of Jacob, with a law of observances which was obligatory upon all entering that covenant by circumcision. In that case it involved, in like manner, the notion of the continuance of an old covenant, after the establishment of the new ; for thus St. Paul states the case in Gal. iii, 19, "Wherefore then serveth the law ? It was added because of transgressions until THE SEED should come." After that therefore it had no effect :—it had waxed old, and had vanished away.

3. Again : Circumcision might imply an obligation to observe all the ceremonial usages and the moral precepts of the Mosaic law, along with a general belief in the mission of Christ, as necessary to justification before God. This appears to have been the view of those among the Galatian Christians who submitted to circumcision, and of the Jewish teachers who enjoined it upon them ; for St. Paul in that epistle constantly joins circumcision with legal observances, and as involving an obligation to do "the whole law," in order to justification.—"I testify again to every man that is circumcised that he is a debtor to do THE WHOLE LAW ; whosoever of you are *justified* by the law, ye are fallen from grace." "Knowing that a man is not justified by the *works of the law*, but by the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ," Gal. ii, 16. To all persons therefore practising circumcision in this view it was obvious, that "Christ was become of none effect," the very principle of justification by faith alone in him was renounced, even whilst his Divine mission was still admitted.

4. But there are two grounds on which circumcision may be conceived to have been *innocently*, though not wisely, practised among the Christian Jews. The first was that of preserving an ancient national distinction on which they valued themselves ; and were a converted Jew in the present day disposed to perform that rite upon his children for this purpose only, renouncing in the act all consideration of it as a sign and seal of the old covenants, or as obliging to ceremonial acts in order to justification, no one would censure him with severity. It appears clear that it was under some such view that St. Paul circumcised Timothy, whose mother was a Jewess ; he did it because of "the Jews which were in those quarters," that is, because of their national prejudices, "for they knew that his father was a Greek." The second was a lingering

notion, that, even in the Christian Church, the Jews who believed would still retain some degree of eminence, some superior relation to God ; a notion which, however unfounded, was not one which demanded direct rebuke, when it did not proudly refuse spiritual communion with the converted Gentiles, but was held by men who "rejoiced that God had granted to the Gentiles repentance unto life." These considerations may account for the silence of St. Paul on the subject of circumcision in his Epistle to the Hebrews. Some of them continued to practise that rite, but they were probably believers of the class just mentioned ; for had he thought that the rite was continued among them on any principle which affected the fundamental doctrines of Christianity, he would no doubt have been equally prompt and fearless in pointing out that apostasy from Christ which was implied in it, as when he wrote to the Galatians.

Not only might circumcision be practised with views so opposite that one might be wholly innocent, although an infirmity of prejudice ; the other such as would involve a rejection of the doctrine of justification by faith in Christ ; but some other Jewish observances also stood in the same circumstances. St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Galatians, a part of his writings from which we obtain the most information on these questions, grounds his "doubts" whether the members of that Church were not seeking to be "justified by the law," upon their observing "days, and months, and times, and years." Had he done more than "doubt," he would have expressed himself more positively. He saw their danger on this point ; he saw that they were taking steps to this fatal result, by such an observance of these "days," &c, as had a strong leaning and dangerous approach to that dependence upon them for justification, which would destroy their faith in Christ's solely sufficient sacrifice ; but his very doubting, not of the fact of their being addicted to these observances, but of the *animus* with which they regarded them, supposes it possible, however dangerous this Jewish conformity might be, that they might be observed for reasons which would still consist with their entire reliance upon the merits of Christ for salvation. Even he himself, strongly as he resisted the imposition of this conformity to Jewish customs upon the converts to Christianity as a matter of necessity, yet in practice must have conformed to many of them, when no sacrifice of principle was understood ; for, in order to gain the Jews, he became "as a Jew."

From these observations, which have been somewhat digressive, we return to observe that not only was the Abrahamic covenant, of which circumcision was the sign and seal, a covenant of grace,



but that when this covenant in its ancient form was done away in Christ, then the old sign and seal peculiar to that form was by consequence abolished. If then baptism be not the initiatory sign and seal of the same covenant in its new and perfect form, as circumcision was of the old, this new covenant has no such initiatory rite or sacrament at all; since the Lord's Supper is not initiatory, but, like the sacrifices of old, is of regular and habitual observance. Several passages of Scripture, and the very nature of the ordinance of baptism, will, however, show that baptism is to the new covenant what circumcision was to the old, and took its place by the APPOINTMENT of Christ.

This may be argued from our Lord's commission to his Apostles, "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you," Matt. xxviii, 19, 20. "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature; he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved," Mark xvi, 15, 16.

To understand the force of these words of our Lord, it must be observed, that the gate of "the common salvation" was only now for the first time going to be opened to the Gentile nations. He himself had declared that in his personal ministry he was not sent but to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel;" and he had restricted his disciples in like manner, not only from ministering to the Gentiles, but from entering any city of the Samaritans. By what means therefore were "all nations" now to be brought into the Church of God, which from henceforth was most truly to be catholic or universal? Plainly, by baptizing them that believed the "good news," and accepted the terms of the new covenant. This is apparent from the very words; and thus was baptism expressly made the initiatory rite, by which believers of "all nations" were to be introduced into the Church and covenant of grace; an office in which it manifestly took the place of circumcision, which heretofore, even from the time of Abraham, had been the only initiatory rite into the same covenant. Moses re-enacted circumcision; our Lord not only does *not* re-enact it, but, on the contrary, he appoints *another* mode of entrance into the covenant in its new and perfected form, and that so expressly as to amount to a formal abrogation of the ancient sign, and the putting of baptism in its place. The same argument may be maintained from the words of our Lord to Nicodemus, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." By the kingdom of God our Lord, no doubt, in the highest sense, means the

future state of felicity ; but he uses this phrase to express the state of his Church on earth, which is the gate to that celestial kingdom ; and generally indeed speaks of his Church on earth under this mode of expression, rather than of the heavenly state. If then he declares that no one can “*enter*” into that Church but by being “born of water and of the Holy Spirit,” which heavenly gift followed upon baptism when received in true faith, he clearly makes baptism the mode of initiation into his Church in this passage as in the last quoted ; and in both he assigns to it the same office as circumcision in the Church of the Old Testament, whether in its Patriarchal or Mosaic form.

A further proof that baptism has precisely the same federal and initiatory character as circumcision, and that it was instituted for the same ends, and in its place, is found in Colossians ii, 10–12, “And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power ; in whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by *the circumcision of Christ*, buried with him in *baptism*,” &c. Here baptism is also made the initiatory rite of the new dispensation, that by which the Colossians were joined to Christ in whom they are said to be “*complete* ;” and so certain is it that baptism has the same office and import now as circumcision formerly,—with this difference only, that the object of faith was then future, and now it is Christ *as come*,—that the Apostle expressly calls baptism “*the circumcision of Christ*,” the circumcision instituted by him, which phrase he puts out of the reach of frivolous criticism, by adding exegetically,—“buried with Him in *baptism*.” For unless the Apostle here calls baptism “the circumcision of Christ,” he asserts that we “put off the body of the sins of the flesh,” that is, become new creatures by virtue of our Lord’s own personal circumcision ; but if this be absurd, then the only reason for which he can call baptism “the circumcision of Christ,” or Christian circumcision, is, that it has taken the place of the Abrahamic circumcision, and fulfils the same office of introducing believing men into God’s covenant, and entitling them to the enjoyment of spiritual blessings.

But let us also quote Gal. iii, 27–29, “For as many of you as have been baptized INTO Christ, have put on Christ ; there is neither Jew nor Gentile, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female, for ye are all one in Christ Jesus ; and if ye are Christ’s,” by thus being “*baptized*,” and by “*putting on*” Christ, “then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.”

The argument here is also decisive. It cannot be denied that it was by circumcision believingly submitted to, that "strangers" or Heathens, as well as Jews, became the spiritual "*seed* of Abraham," and "heirs" of the same spiritual and heavenly "*promises*." But the same office in this passage is ascribed to baptism also believingly submitted to; and the conclusion is therefore inevitable. The same *covenant* character of each rite is here also strongly marked, as well as that the covenant is the same, although under a different mode of administration. In no other way could circumcision avail any thing under the Abrahamic covenant, than as it was that visible act by which God's covenant to justify men by faith in the promised Seed was accepted by them. It was therefore a part of a federal transaction; that outward act which he who offered a covenant engagement so gracious required as a solemn declaration of the acceptance of the covenanted grace upon the covenanted conditions. It was thus that the Abrahamic covenant was offered to the acceptance of all who heard it, and thus that they were to declare their acceptance of it. In the same manner there is a standing offer of the same covenant of mercy wherever the Gospel is preached. The "good news" which it contains is that of a promise, an engagement, a covenant on the part of God to remit sin, and to save all that believe in Christ. To the covenant in this new form he also requires a visible and formal act of acceptance, which act when expressive of the required faith makes us parties to the covenant, and entitles us through the faithfulness of God to its benefits. "He that *believeth* and is *baptized* shall be saved;" or, as in the passage before us, "As many of you as have been *baptized* into Christ, have put on Christ; and if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."

We have the same view of baptism as an act of covenant acceptance, and as it relates to God's gracious engagement to justify the ungodly by faith in his Son, in the often quoted passage in 1 Peter iii, 20, "Which sometime were disobedient, when once the long suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. The like figure whereunto *even* baptism doth also now save us, (not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ."

When St. Peter calls baptism the "figure," *αντίτυπον*, the anti-type of the transaction by which Noah and his family were saved from perishing with the ungodly and unbelieving world, he had doubtless in mind the *faith* of Noah, and that under the same view



as the Apostle Paul, in Heb. xi, "By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which" act of faith "he condemned the world, *and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith*," an expression of the same import as if he had said, "by which act of faith he was justified before God." It has been already explained in another place (2) in what way Noah's preparing of the ark, and his faith in the Divine promise of preservation, were indicative of his having that direct faith in the Christ to come, of which the Apostle Paul discourses in the eleventh of the Hebrews, as that which characterized "all the Elders," and by which they obtained their "good report" in the Church. His preservation and that of his family was so involved in the fulfilment of the more ancient promise respecting the Seed of the woman, and the deliverance of man from the power of Satan, that we are warranted to conclude that his faith in the promise respecting his own deliverance from the deluge, was supported by his faith in that greater promise, which must have fallen to the ground had the whole race perished without exception. His building of the ark, and entering into it with his family, are therefore considered, by St. Paul, as the visible expression of his faith in the ancient promises of God respecting Messiah; and for this reason baptism is called by St. Peter, without any allegory at all, but in the sobriety of fact "the *anti-type*" of this transaction; the one exactly answering to the other, as an external expression of faith in the same objects and the same promises.

But the Apostle does not rest in this general representation. He proceeds to express, in a particular and most forcible manner, the nature of Christian baptism,—“not the putting away of the filth of the flesh; but the answer of a good conscience towards God, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.” Now, whether we take the word *επερωτημα*, rendered in our translation “answer,” for a *demand* or *requirement*; or for the *answer* to a question or questions; or in the sense of *stipulation*; the general import of the passage is nearly the same. If the first, then the meaning of the Apostle is, that baptism is not the putting away the filth of the flesh, not a mere external ceremony; but a rite which *demands* or *requires* something of us, in order to the attainment of a “good conscience.” What that is, we learn from the words of our Lord; it is faith in Christ; “He that *believeth* and is baptized shall be saved;” which faith is the reliance of a penitent upon the atonement of the Saviour,

who thus submits with all gratitude and truth to the terms of the evangelical covenant. If we take the second sense, we must lay aside the notion of some lexicographers and commentators, who think that there is an allusion to the *ancient* practice of demanding of the candidates for baptism, whether they renounced their sins, and the service of Satan, with other questions of the same import ; for, *ancient* as these questions may be, they are probably not so ancient as the time of the Apostle. We know however, from the instance of Philip and the Eunuch, that there was an explicit *requirement* of *faith*, and as explicit an answer or confession : “And Philip said, If thou believest with all thy heart, thou mayest ; and he answered, I believe that Jesus is the Son of God.” Every administration of baptism indeed implied this demand ; and baptism, if we understand St. Peter to refer to this circumstance, was such an “answer” to the interrogations of the administrator, as expressed a true and evangelical faith. If we take the third rendering of “*stipulation*,” which has less to support it critically than either of the others, still as the profession of *faith* was a condition of baptism, that profession had the full force of a formal stipulation, since all true faith in Christ requires an entire subjection to him as Lord, as well as Saviour.

Upon this passage, however, a somewhat clearer light may be thrown, by understanding the word *ἐπερωτημα* in the sense of that which *asks, requires, seeks*, something beyond itself. The verb from which it is derived signifies to ask, or require ; but *ἐπερωτημα* occurs no where else in the New Testament ; and but once in the version of the Seventy, Dan. iv, 17, where, however, it is used so as to be fully illustrative of the meaning of St. Peter. Nebuchadnezzar was to be humbled by being driven from men to associate with the beasts of the field ; and the vision in which this was represented, concludes, “This matter is by the decree of the watchers, and the demand, το ἐπερωτημα, by the word of the holy ones, to the *intent* that the living may know, *ἵνα γινῶσιν οἱ ζῶντες*, that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men.” The Chaldaic word, like the Greek, is from a verb which signifies to ask, to require, and may be equally expressed by the word *petitio*, which is the rendering of the Vulgate, or by *postulatum*. There was an *end*, an “*intent*,” for which the humbling of the Babylonian king was required “by the word of the holy ones,” that, by the signal punishment of the greatest earthly monarch, “the living might know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men.” In like manner baptism has an end, an “*intent*,” “not the putting away the filth of the flesh,” but obtaining “a good conscience towards God ;” and it *requires*,

*claims*, this good conscience, through that faith in Christ whereof cometh remission of sins, the cleansing of the "conscience from dead works," and those supplies of supernatural aid by which, in future, men may "live in all good conscience before God." It is thus that we see how St. Peter preserves the correspondence between the act of Noah in preparing the ark as an act of faith by which he was justified, and the act of submitting to Christian baptism, which is also obviously an act of faith, in order to the remission of sins, or the obtaining a good conscience before God. This is further strengthened by his immediately adding, "by the resurrection of Jesus Christ:" A clause which our translators, by the use of a parenthesis, connect with "baptism doth also now save us;" so that their meaning is, we are saved by baptism through the resurrection of Jesus Christ; and as he "rose again for our justification," this sufficiently shows the true sense of the Apostle, who, by our being "saved," clearly means our being justified by faith.

The text however needs no parenthesis, and the true sense may be thus expressed: "The antitype to which water of the flood, baptism, doth now save us; not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but that which intently seeks *a good conscience* towards God, through faith in the resurrection of Jesus Christ." But however a particular word may be disposed of, the whole passage can only be consistently taken to teach us, that baptism is the outward sign of our entrance into God's covenant of mercy; and that when it is an act of true faith, it becomes an instrument of salvation, like that act of faith in Noah, by which, when moved with fear, he "prepared an ark to the saving of his house," and survived the destruction of an unbelieving world.

From what has been said it will then follow, that the Abrahamic covenant and the Christian covenant is the same gracious engagement on the part of God to show mercy to man, and to bestow upon him eternal life, through faith in Christ as the true sacrifice for sin, differing only in circumstances; and that as the sign and seal of this covenant under the Old dispensation was circumcision, under the New it is baptism, which has the same federal character, performs the same initiatory office, and is instituted by the same authority. For none could have authority to lay aside the appointed seal, but the Being who first instituted it, who changed the form of the covenant itself, and who has in fact abrogated the old seal by the appointment of another, even baptism, which is made obligatory upon "all nations to whom the Gospel is preached, and is" to continue to "the end of the world."

This argument is sufficiently extended to show that the Anti-



pædobaptist writers have in vain endeavoured to prove that baptism has not been appointed in the room of circumcision; a point on which, indeed, they were bound to employ all their strength; for, the substitution of baptism for circumcision being established, one of their main objections to infant baptism, as we shall just now show, is rendered wholly nugatory.

But it is not enough, in stating the nature of the ordinance of Christian baptism, to consider it generally as an act by which man enters into God's covenant of grace. Under this general view several particulars are contained, which it is of great importance rightly to understand. Baptism, both as a *sign* and *seal*, presents an entire correspondence with the ancient rite of circumcision. Let it then be considered,

1. AS A SIGN. Under this view, circumcision indicated, by a visible and continued rite, the *placability* of God towards his sinful creatures; and held out the promise of justification, by faith alone, to every truly penitent offender. It went further, and was the sign of sanctification, or the taking away the pollution of sin, "the superfluity of naughtiness," as well as the pardon of actual offences, and thus was the visible emblem of a regenerate mind, and a renewed life. This will appear from the following passages, "For he is not a Jew which is one outwardly in the flesh; but he is a Jew which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the *spirit*, and not in the *letter*, whose praise is not of men, but of God," Rom. ii, 28. "And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live," Deut. xxx, 6. "Circumcise yourselves to the Lord, and take away the foreskins of your heart, ye men of Judah, and inhabitants of Jerusalem," Jer. iv, 3. It was the *sign* also of peculiar relation to God, as his people: "Only the Lord had a delight in thy fathers to love them, and he chose their seed after them, even you above all people as it is this day. Circumcise, THEREFORE, the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiff necked," Deut. x, 15, 16.

In all these respects, baptism, as a *sign* of the new covenant, corresponds to circumcision. Like that, its administration is a constant exhibition of the placability of God to man; like that, it is the initiatory rite into a covenant which promises pardon and salvation to a true faith, of which it is the outward profession; like that, it is the symbol of regeneration, the washing away of sin, and "the renewing of the Holy Ghost;" and like that, it is a sign of peculiar relation to God, Christians becoming, in consequence,

“a chosen generation, a peculiar people,”—his “*church*” on earth, as distinguished from “the world.” “For we,” says the Apostle, “are the circumcision,” we are that peculiar people and church now, which was formerly distinguished by the sign of circumcision, “who worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.”

But as a *sign* baptism is more than circumcision; because the covenant, under its new dispensation, was not only to offer pardon upon believing, deliverance from the bondage of fleshly appetites, and a peculiar spiritual relation to God, all of which we find under the Old Testament; but also to bestow *the Holy Spirit*, in his *FULNESS*, upon all believers; and of this effusion of “the Power from on High,” baptism was made the visible sign; and perhaps for this, among some other obvious reasons, was substituted for circumcision, because baptism *by effusion*, or *pouring*, (the New Testament mode of baptizing, as we shall afterwards show,) was a natural symbol of this heavenly gift. The baptism of John had special reference to the Holy Spirit, which was not to be administered by him, but by Christ who should come after him. This gift only honoured John’s baptism once, in the extraordinary case of our Lord; but it constantly followed upon the baptism administered by the Apostles of Christ, after his ascension, and “the sending of the promise of the Father.” Then Peter said unto them, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you for the remission of sins, and *ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost*,” Acts ii, 17. “According to his mercy he saved us by the washing of regeneration, and the *renewing of the Holy Ghost*, which he *shed*,” or *poured out*, “on us abundantly through Jesus Christ.” For this reason Christianity is called “the ministration of the Spirit;” and so far is this from being confined to the miraculous gifts often bestowed in the first age of the Church, that it is made the standing and prominent test of true Christianity to “be led by the Spirit,”—“If ANY MAN have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.” Of this great new covenant blessing, baptism was therefore eminently the *sign*; and it represented “the *pouring out*” of the Spirit, “the *descending*” of the Spirit, the “*falling*” of the Spirit “upon men,” by the mode in which it was administered, the *POURING* of water *FROM ABOVE* upon the subjects baptized.

As a *SEAL* also, or *confirming* sign, baptism answers to circumcision. By the institution of the latter, A *PLEDGE* was constantly given by the Almighty to bestow the spiritual blessings of which the rite was the sign, pardon and sanctification through faith in the future Seed of Abraham; peculiar relation to Him as “his people;”

and the heavenly inheritance. Of the same blessings, baptism is also the pledge, along with that higher dispensation of the Holy Spirit which it specially represents in emblem. Thus in baptism there is on the part of God a visible assurance of his faithfulness to his covenant stipulations. But it is *our seal* also ; it is that act by which we make ourselves parties to the covenant, and thus “set to our seal, that God is true.” In this respect it binds us, as, in the other, God mercifully binds himself for the stronger assurance of our faith. We *pledge* ourselves to trust wholly in Christ for pardon and salvation, and to obey his laws ;—“teaching them ‘to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you :’” in that rite also we undergo a mystical death unto sin, a mystical separation from the world, which St. Paul calls being “buried with Christ in or by baptism ;” and a mystical resurrection to newness of life, through Christ’s resurrection from the dead. Thus in circumcision, an obligation of faith in the promises made to Abraham, and an obligation to holiness of life, and to the observance of the Divine laws, was contracted ; and Moses, therefore, in a passage above quoted, argues from that peculiar visible relation of the Israelites to God, produced by outward circumcision, to the duty of circumcising the heart : “The Lord had a delight in thy fathers to love them, and he chose their seed after them, even you above all people ; circumcise THEREFORE the foreskin of your heart,” Deut. x, 15.

If then we bring all these considerations under one view, we shall find it sufficiently established that baptism is the sign and seal of the covenant of grace under its perfected dispensation ;—that it is the grand initiatory act by which we enter into this covenant, in order to claim all its spiritual blessings, and to take upon ourselves all its obligations ;—that it was appointed by Jesus Christ in a manner which plainly put it in the place of circumcision ;—that it is now the means by which men become Abraham’s spiritual children, and heirs with him of the promise, which was the office of circumcision, until “the Seed,” the Messiah, should come ;—and that baptism is therefore expressly called by St. Paul “the circumcision of Christ,” or Christian circumcision, in a sense which can only import that baptism has now taken the place of the Abrahamic rite.

The only objection of any plausibility which has been urged by Anti-pædobaptist writers against the substitution of baptism for circumcision, is thus stated by Mr. Booth : “If baptism succeeded in the place of circumcision, how came it that both of them were in full force at the same time, that is, from the commencement of



John's ministry to the death of Christ? For one thing to come in the room of another, and the latter to hold its place, is an odd kind of succession. Admitting the succession pretended, how came it that Paul circumcised Timothy, after he had been baptized?" That circumcision was practised along with baptism from John the Baptist's ministry to the death of Christ may be very readily granted, without affecting the question; for baptism could not be made the sign and seal of the perfected covenant of grace, until that covenant was both perfected, and fully explained and proposed for acceptance, which did not take place until after "the blood of the everlasting covenant" was shed, and our Lord had opened its full import to the Apostles who were to publish it "to all nations" after his resurrection. Accordingly we find that baptism was formally made the rite of initiation into this covenant for the first time, when our Lord gave commission to his disciples to "go and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,"—"he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." John's baptism was upon profession of repentance, and faith in the speedy appearance of Him who was to baptize with the Holy Ghost, and fire; and our Lord's baptism by his disciples was administered to those Jews that believed on him, as the Messias, all of whom, like the Apostles, waited for a fuller developement of his character and offices. For since the new covenant was not then fully perfected, it could not be proposed in any other way than to prepare them that believed in Christ, by its partial but increasing manifestation in the discourses of our Lord, for the full declaration both of its benefits and obligations; which declaration was not made until after his resurrection. Whatever the nature and intent of that baptism which our Lord by his disciples administered might be, (a point on which we have no information,) like that of John it looked to something yet to come, and was not certainly that baptism in the name "of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," which was afterward instituted as the standing initiatory rite into the Christian Church. As for the circumcision of Timothy, and the practice of that rite among many of the Hebrew believers, it has already been accounted for. If indeed the Baptist writers could show that the Apostles sanctioned the practice of circumcision as a seal of the old covenant, either as it was Abrahamic or Mosaic, or both, then there would be some force in the argument, that one could not succeed the other, if both were continued under inspired authority. But we have the most decided testimony of the Apostle Paul against any such use of circumcision; and he makes it, when practised in that view, a

total abnegation of Christ and the new covenant. It follows then, that, when circumcision was continued by any *connivance* of the Apostles,—and certainly they did no more than *connive* at it,—it was practised upon some grounds which did not regard it as the seal of any covenant, from national custom, or prejudice, a feeling to which the Apostle Paul himself yielded in the case of Timothy. He circumcised him, but not from any conviction of necessity, since he uniformly declared circumcision to have vanished away with that dispensation of the covenant of which it was the seal, through the bringing in of a better hope.

We may here add, that an early Father, Justin Martyr, takes the same view of the substitution of circumcision by Christian baptism: “We, Gentiles,” Justin observes, “have not received that circumcision according to the flesh, but that which is spiritual—and moreover, for indeed we were sinners, we have received this in *baptism*, through God’s mercy, and it is enjoined on all to receive it in like manner.”

II. The nature of baptism having been thus explained, we may proceed to consider its SUBJECTS.

That believers are the proper subjects of baptism, as they were of circumcision, is beyond dispute. As it would have been a monstrous perversion of circumcision to have administered it to any person, being of adult age, who did not believe in the true and living God, and in the expected “Seed of Abraham,” in whom all nations were to be blessed; so is faith in Christ also an indispensable condition for baptism in all persons of mature age: and no Minister is at liberty to take from the candidate the visible pledge of his acceptance of the terms of God’s covenant, unless he has been first taught its nature, promises, and obligations, and gives sufficient evidence of the reality of his faith, and the sincerity of his profession of obedience. Hence the administration of baptism was placed by our Lord only in the hands of those who were “to preach the Gospel,” that is, of those who were to declare God’s method of saving men “through faith in Christ,” and to teach them “to observe all things, whatsoever Christ had commanded them.” Circumcision was connected with teaching, and belief of the truth taught; and so also is Christian baptism.

The question, however, which now requires consideration is, whether the infant children of believing parents are entitled to be made parties to the covenant of grace, by the act of their parents, and the administration of baptism?

In favour of infant baptism, the following arguments may be adduced. Some of them are more direct than others; but the

reader will judge whether, taken all together, they do not establish this practice of the Church, continued to us from the earliest ages, upon the strongest basis of **SCRIPTURAL AUTHORITY**.

1. As it has been established, that baptism was put by our Lord himself and his Apostles in the room of circumcision, as an initiatory rite into the covenant of grace; and as the infant children of believers under the Old Testament were entitled to the covenant benefits of the latter ordinance, and the children of Christian believers are not expressly excluded from entering into the same covenant by baptism; the absence of such an explicit exclusion is sufficient proof of their title to baptism.

For if the covenant be the same in all its spiritual blessings, and an express change was made by our Lord in the *sign* and *seal* of that covenant, but no change at all in the *subjects* of it, no one can have a right to carry that change further than the Lawgiver himself, and to exclude the children of believers from entering his covenant by baptism, when they had always been entitled to enter into it by circumcision. This is a censurable interference with the authority of God; a presumptuous attempt to fashion the new dispensation in this respect so as to conform it to a mere human opinion of fitness and propriety. For to say, that, because baptism is directed to be administered to believers when adults are spoken of, it follows that children who are not capable of personal faith are excluded from baptism, is only to argue in the same manner as if it were contended, that, because circumcision, when adults were the subjects, was only to be administered to believers, therefore infants were excluded from that ordinance, which is contrary to the fact. This argument will not certainly exclude them from baptism by way of inference, and by no act of the Maker and Mediator of the covenant are they shut out.

2. If it had been intended to exclude infants from entering into the new covenant by baptism, the absence of every prohibitory expression to this effect in the New Testament, must have been misleading to all men; and especially to the Jewish believers.

Baptism was no new ordinance when our Lord instituted it, though he gave to it a particular designation. It was in his practice to adapt, in several instances, what he found already established, to the uses of his religion. "A parable, for instance, was the Jewish mode of teaching. Who taught by parables equal to Jesus Christ? And what is the most distinguished and appropriate rite of his religion, but a service grafted on a Passover custom among the Jews of his day? It was not ordained by Moses, that a part of the bread they had used in the Passover should be the last thing they



ate after that supper; yet this our Lord took as he found it, and converted it into a memorial of his body. The ‘cup of blessing’ has no authority whatever from the original institution; yet this our Lord found in use, and adopted as a memorial of his blood:—taken together, these elements form one commemoration of his death. Probability, arising to rational certainty, therefore, would lead us to infer, that whatever rite Jesus appointed as the ordinance of admission into the community of his followers, he would also adopt from some service already existing—from some token familiar among the people of his nation.

“In fact, we know that ‘*divers baptisms*’ existed under the law, and we have every reason to believe, that the admission of proselytes into the profession of Judaism, was really and truly marked by a *washing* with water in a ritual and ceremonial manner. I have always understood that Maimonides is perfectly correct when he says, ‘*In all ages, when a Heathen (or a stranger by nation) was willing to enter into the covenant of Israel, and gather himself under the wings of the majesty of God, and take upon himself the yoke of the law—he must be first circumcised, and secondly BAPTIZED, and thirdly bring a sacrifice; or if the party were a woman, then she must be first BAPTIZED; and secondly bring a sacrifice.*’ He adds, ‘*At this present time when (the temple being destroyed) there is no sacrificing, a stranger must be first circumcised, and secondly BAPTIZED.*’

“Dr. Gill, indeed, in his *Dissertation on Jewish Proselyte Baptism*, has ventured the assertion, that ‘there is no mention made of any rite or custom of admitting Jewish Proselytes by *baptism*, in any writings or records before the time of John the Baptist, Christ and his Apostles; nor in any age after them, for the first three or four hundred years; or, however, before the writing of the *Talmuds*.’ But the learned Doctor has not condescended to understand the evidence of this fact. It does not rest on the testimony of Jewish records solely; it was in circulation among the Heathen, as we learn from the clear and demonstrative testimony of Epictetus, who has these words: (He is blaming those who assume the profession of Philosophy without acting up to it:) ‘Why do you call yourself a Stoic? Why do you deceive the multitude? Why do you pretend to be a *Greek*, when you are a *Jew*? a *Syrian*? an *Egyptian*? And when we see any one wavering, we are wont to say, This is not a *Jew*, but acts one. But when he assumes the sentiments of one who hath been *baptized* and *circumcised*, then he both really is, and is called, a *Jew*. Thus we, falsifying our profession, are *Jews* in name, but in reality something else.’

“This practice then of the Jews,—*proselyte baptism*,—was so

notorious to the Heathen in Italy and in Greece, that it furnished this philosopher with an object of comparison. Now, Epictetus lived to be very old: He is placed by Dr. Lardner, A. D. 109, by Le Clerc, A. D. 104. He could not be less than sixty years of age when he wrote this; and he might obtain his information thirty or forty years earlier, which brings it up to the time of the Apostles. Those who could think that the Jews could institute *proselyte baptism* at the very moment when the Christians were practising *baptism* as an initiatory rite, are not to be envied for the correctness of their judgment. The rite certainly dates much earlier, probably many ages. I see no reason for disputing the assertion of Maimonides, notwithstanding Dr. Gill's rash and fallacious language on the subject." (3)

This baptism of proselytes, as Lightfoot has fully showed, was a baptism of *families*, and comprehended their infant children; and the rite was a symbol of their being washed from the pollution of idolatry. Very different indeed in the extent of its import and office was Christian baptism to the Jewish baptisms; nevertheless, this shows that the Jews were familiar with the rite as it extended to children, in cases of conversions from idolatry; and, as far at least as the converts from paganism to Christianity were concerned, they could not but understand Christian baptism to extend to the infant children of Gentile proselytes, unless there had been, what we nowhere find in the discourses of Christ and the writings of the Apostles, an *express exception* of them. In like manner, their own practice of infant circumcision must have misled them; for if they were taught that baptism was the initiatory seal of the Christian covenant, and had taken the place of circumcision, which St. Paul had informed them was "a seal of the righteousness which is by faith," how should they have understood that their children were no longer to be taken into covenant with God, as under their own former religion, unless they had been told that this exclusion of children from all covenant relation to God, was one of those *peculiarities* of the Christian dispensation in which it differed from the religion of the Patriarchs and Moses? This was surely a great change; a change which must have made great impression upon a serious and affectionate Jewish parent, who could now no longer covenant with God for his children, or place his children in a special covenant relation to the Lord of the whole earth; a change indeed so great,—a placing of the children of Christian parents in so inferior, and, so to speak, *outcast* a condition, in comparison of the

children of believing Jews, whilst the Abrahamic covenant remained in force,—that not only, in order to prevent mistake, did it require an express enunciation, but in the nature of the thing it must have given rise to so many objections, or at least inquiries, that explanations of the reason of this peculiarity might naturally be expected to occur in the writings of the Apostles, and especially in those of St. Paul. On the contrary, the very phraseology of these inspired men, when touching the subject of the children of believers only incidentally, was calculated to confirm the ancient practice, in opposition to what we are told is the true doctrine of the Gospel upon this point. For instance : how could the Jews have understood the words of Peter at the Pentecost, but as calling both upon them and their children, to be baptized?—"Repent and be baptized, for the promise is unto you and to your children." For that both are included, may be proved, says a sensible writer, by considering,

"1. The resemblance between this promise, and that in Gen. xvii, 7, 'To be a God unto thee, and unto thy seed after thee.'—The resemblance between these two lies in two things : (1.) Each stands connected with an ordinance, by which persons were to be admitted into Church fellowship ; the one by circumcision, the other by baptism. (2.) Both agree in phraseology ; the one is, 'to thee and thy seed ;' the other is, 'to you and your children.' Now, every one knows that the word *seed* means children ; and that *children* means seed ; and that they are precisely the same. From these two strongly resembling features, viz. their connexion with a similar ordinance, and the sameness of the phraseology, I infer, that the subjects expressed in each, are the very same. And as it is certain that parents and infants were intended by the one ; it must be equally certain that both are intended by the other.

"2. The sense in which the speaker must have understood the sentence in question : 'The promise is to you, and to your children.'—In order to know this, we must consider who the speaker was, and from what source he received his religious knowledge. The Apostle was a Jew. He knew that he himself had been admitted in infancy, and that it was the ordinary practice of the Church to admit infants to membership. And he likewise knew, that in this they acted on the authority of that place, where God promises to Abraham, 'to be a God unto him, and unto his seed.' Now, if the Apostle knew all this, in what sense could he understand the term children, as distinguished from their parents ? I have said that τέκνα, children, and σπέρμα, seed, mean the same



thing. And as the Apostle well knew that the term *seed* intended infants, though not mere infants only; and that infants were circumcised and received into the Church as being the seed, what else could he understand by the term *children*, when mentioned with their parents? Those who will have the Apostle to mean, by the term *children*, 'adult posterity' only, have this infelicity attending them, that they understand the term differently from all other men; and they attribute to the Apostle a sense of the word, which to him must have been the most forced and unfamiliar.

"3. In what sense his hearers must have understood him, when he said, 'The promise is to you, and to your children.'

"The context informs us, that many of St. Peter's hearers, as he himself was, were Jews. They had been accustomed for many hundred years to receive infants by circumcision into the Church; and this they did, as before observed, because God had promised to be a God to Abraham and to his seed. They had understood this promise to mean parents and their infant offspring, and this idea was become familiar by the practice of many centuries. What then must have been their views, when one of their own community says to them, 'The promise is to you and to your children?' If their practice of receiving infants was founded on a promise exactly similar, as it was, how could they possibly understand him, but as meaning the same thing, since he himself used the same mode of speech? This must have been the case, unless we admit this absurdity, that they understood him in a sense to which they had never been accustomed.

"How idle a thing it is, in a Baptist, to come with a lexicon in his hand, to inform us that *τεκνα*, children, means posterity! Certainly it does, and so includes the youngest infants.

"But the Baptists will have it that *τεκνα*, children, in this place, means only *adult posterity*. And if so, the Jews to whom he spoke, unless they understood St. Peter in a way in which it was morally impossible they should, would infallibly have understood him wrong. Certainly, all men, when acting freely, will understand words in that way which is most familiar to them; and nothing could be more so to the Jews, than to understand such a speech as Peter's to mean adults and infants.

"We should more certainly come at the truth, if, instead of idly criticising, we could fancy ourselves Jews, and in the habit of circumcising infants, and receiving them into the Church; and then could we imagine one of our own nation and religion to address us in the very language of Peter in this text, 'The pro-

mise is to you and to your children ;' let us ask ourselves whether we could ever suppose him to mean adult posterity only !"(3)

To this we may add that St. Paul calls the children of believers *holy*, separated to God, and standing therefore in a peculiar relation to him, 1 Cor. vii, 14 ; a mode of speech which would also have been wholly unintelligible at least to a Jew, unless by some rite of Christianity children were made sharers in its covenanted mercies.

The practice of the Jews, and the very language of the Apostles, so naturally leading therefore to a misunderstanding of this sacrament, if infant baptism be not a Christian rite, and that in respect of its subjects themselves, it was the more necessary that some notice of the exclusion of infants from the Christian covenant should have been given by way of guard. And as we find no intimation of this prohibitory kind, we may confidently conclude that it was never the design of Christ to restrict this ordinance to adults only.

3. Infant children are DECLARED BY CHRIST to be members of his Church.

That they were made members of God's Church in the family of Abraham, and among the Jews, cannot be denied. They were made so by circumcision, which was not that carnal and merely political rite which many Baptist writers in contradiction to the Scriptures make it, but was, as we have seen, the seal of a spiritual covenant, comprehending engagements to bestow the remission of sins and all its consequent blessings in this life, and, in another, the heavenly Canaan. Among these blessings was that special relation, which consisted in becoming a visible and peculiar people of God, his CHURCH. This was contained in that engagement of the covenant, "I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people ;" a promise, which, however connected with temporal advantages, was, in its highest and most emphatic sense, wholly spiritual. Circumcision was therefore a *religious*, and not a mere political rite, because the covenant, of which it was the seal, was in its most ample sense spiritual. If therefore we had no direct authority from the words of Christ to declare the infant children of believers *competent* to become the members of his Church, the two circumstances,—that the Church of God, which has always been one Church in all ages, and into which the Gentiles are now introduced, formerly admitted infants to membership by circumcision,—and that the *mode* of initiation into it only has been changed,

and not the *subjects*, (of which we have no intimation,) would themselves prove that baptism admits into the Christian Church both believing parents and their children, as circumcision admitted both. The same Church remains; for "the olive tree" is not destroyed; the natural branches only are broken off, and the Gentiles grafted in, and "partake of the root and fatness of the olive tree," that is, of all the spiritual blessings and privileges heretofore enjoyed by the Jews, in consequence of their relation to God as his Church. But among these spiritual privileges and blessings, was the right of placing their children in covenant with God; the membership of the Jews comprehended both children and adults; and the grafting in of the Gentiles, so as to partake of the same "root and fatness," will therefore include a right to put their children also into the covenant, so that they as well as adults may become members of Christ's Church, have God to be "their God," and be acknowledged by him, in the special sense of the terms of the covenant, to be his "people."

But we have our Lord's direct testimony to this point, and that in two remarkable passages, Luke ix, 47, 48, "And Jesus took a child and set him by him, and he said unto them, Whosoever shall receive this child in my name, receiveth me; and whosoever shall receive me, receiveth him that sent me; for he that is least among you all, the same shall be great." We grant that this is an instance of teaching by parabolic action. The intention of Christ was to impress the necessity of humility and teachableness upon his disciples, and to afford a promise, to those who should receive them in his name, of that special grace which was implied in receiving himself. But then, were there not a correspondence of circumstances between the child taken by Jesus in his arms, and the disciples compared to this child, there would be no force, no propriety, in the action, and the same truth might have been as forcibly stated without any action of this kind at all. Let then these correspondences be remarked in order to estimate the amount of their meaning. The humility and docility of the true disciple corresponded with the same dispositions in a young child; and the "receiving a disciple in *the name*" of Christ corresponds with the receiving of a child in *the name* of Christ, which can only mean the receiving of each with kindness, on account of a *religious relation* between each and Christ, which religious relation can only be well interpreted of a *Church relation*. This is further confirmed by the next point of correspondence, the *identity* of Christ both with the disciple and the child, "Whosoever shall receive this child in my name *receiveth me*;" but such an identity of Christ



with his disciples stands wholly upon their relation to him as members of his mystical "body, the Church." It is in this respect only that they are "one with him;" and there can be no identity of Christ with "little children" but by virtue of the same relation, that is, as they are *members* of his mystical body, the Church; of which *membership*, baptism is now, as circumcision was then, the initiatory rite. That was the relation in which the very child he then took up in his arms stood to him by virtue of its circumcision; it was a member of his Old Testament Church; but, as he is speaking of the disciples as the future teachers of his perfected covenant, and their reception in his name under that character, he manifestly glances at the Church relationship of children to him to be established by the baptism to be instituted in his perfect dispensation.

This is, however, expressed still more explicitly in Mark x, 14, "But when Jesus saw it he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God:— and he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them." Here the children spoken of are "little children," of so tender an age, that our Lord "took them up in his arms." The purpose for which they were brought was not, as some of the Baptist writers would suggest, that Christ should heal them of diseases; for though St. Mark says, "They brought young children to Christ that he might *touch* them," this is explained by St. Matthew, who says, "that he should put his hands upon them, and pray;" and even in the statement of St. Mark, x, 16, it is not said that our Lord healed them, but "put his hands upon them, and *blessed* them;" which clearly enough shows that this was the purpose for which they were brought by their parents to Christ. Nor is there any evidence that it was the practice among the Jews, for common unofficial persons to put their hands upon the heads of those for whom they prayed. The parents here appear to have been among those who believed Christ to be a Prophet, "*that Prophet*," or the Messiah; and on that account earnestly desired his prayers for their children, and his *official* blessing upon them. That official blessing,—the blessing which he was authorized and empowered to bestow by virtue of his Messiahship,—he was so ready, we might say so anxious, to bestow upon them, that he was "*much displeased*" with his disciples who "rebuked them that brought them," and gave a command which was to be in force in all future time,—"*Suffer the little children to come unto me,*" in order to receive my official blessing; "*for of such is the kingdom of God.*"

The first evasive criticism of the Baptist writers is, that the phrase "of such," means of such-like, that is, of adults being of a child-like disposition; a criticism which takes away all meaning from the words of our Lord. For what kind of reason was it to offer for permitting children to come to Christ to receive his blessing, that persons not children, but who were of a child-like disposition, were the subjects of the kingdom of God? The absurdity of this is its own refutation, since the reason for children being permitted to come, must be found in themselves, and not in others. The second attempt to evade the argument from this passage is, to understand "the kingdom of God," or "the kingdom of heaven," as St. Matthew has it, exclusively of the heavenly state. We gladly admit, in opposition to the Calvinistic Baptists, that all children, dying before actual sin committed, are admitted into heaven through the merits of Christ; but for this very reason it follows that infants are proper subjects to be introduced into his Church on earth. The phrases, "the kingdom of God," and "the kingdom of heaven," are, however, more frequently used by our Lord to denote the Church in this present world, than in its state of glory; and since all the children brought to Christ to receive his blessing were not likely to die in their infancy, it could not be affirmed, that "of such is the kingdom of heaven," if that be understood to mean the state of future happiness exclusively. As children, they might all be members of the Church on earth; but not all *as children*, members of the Church in heaven, seeing they might live to become adult, and be cast away. Thus, therefore, if children are expressly declared to be members of Christ's Church, then are they the proper subjects of baptism, which is the initiatory rite into every portion of that Church which is visible.

But let this case be more particularly considered.

Take it that by "the kingdom of God," or "of heaven," our Lord means the glorified state of his Church; it must be granted that none can enter into heaven who are not redeemed by Christ, and who do not stand in a vital relation to him as members of his mystical body, or otherwise we should place human and fallen beings in that heavenly state who are unconnected with Christ as their Redeemer, and uncleansed by him as the Sanctifier of his redeemed. Now, this relation must exist on earth, before it can exist in heaven; or else we assign the work of sanctifying the fallen nature of man to a future state, which is contrary to the Scriptures. If infants, therefore, are thus redeemed and sanctified in their nature, and are before death made "meet for the inheritance of the saints in light;" so that in this world they are placed

in the same relation to Christ as an adult believer, who derives sanctifying influence from him, they are therefore the members of his Church,—they partake the grace of the covenant, and are comprehended in that promise of the covenant, “I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people.” In other words, they are made members of Christ’s Church, and are entitled to be recognised as such by the administration of the visible sign of initiation into some visible branch of it. If it be asked, “Of what import then is baptism to children, if as infants they already stand in a favourable relation to Christ?” the answer is, that it is of the same import as circumcision was to Abraham, which was “a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised:” it confirmed all the promises of the covenant of grace to him, and made the Church of God *visible* to men. It is of the same import as baptism to the Eunuch, who had faith already, and a willingness to submit to the rite before it was administered to him. He stood at that moment in the condition, not of a *candidate* for introduction into the Church, but of an *accepted* candidate; he was *virtually* a member, although not *formally* so, and his baptism was not merely a sign of his faith, but a *confirming* sign of God’s covenant relation to him as a pardoned and accepted man, and gave him a security for the continuance and increase of the grace of the covenant, as he was prepared to receive it. In like manner, in the case of all *truly believing* adults applying for baptism, their relation to Christ is not that of mere candidates for membership with his Church, but that of *accepted* candidates, standing already in a vital relation to him, but about to receive the seal which was to confirm that grace, and its increase in the ordinance itself, and in future time. Thus this *previous* relation of infants to Christ, as accepted by him, is an argument for their baptism, not against it, seeing it is by that they are visibly recognised as the formal members of his Church, and have the full grace of the covenant confirmed and sealed to them, with increase of grace as they are fitted to receive it, besides the advantage of visible connexion with the Church, and of that obligation which is taken upon themselves by their parents to train them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

In both views then, “of such is the kingdom of God,”—members of his Church on earth, and of his Church in heaven, if they die in infancy, for the one is necessarily involved in the other. No one can be of the kingdom of God in heaven, who does not stand in a vital sanctifying relation to Christ as the head of his mystical body, the Church, on earth; and no one can be of the kingdom of God



on earth, a member of his true Church, and die in that relation, without entering that state of glory to which his adoption on earth makes him an heir, through Christ.

4. The argument from apostolic practice next offers itself. That practice was to baptize the *houses* of them that believed.

The impugnors of infant baptism are pleased to argue much from the absence of all express mention of the baptism of infants in the New Testament. This however is easily accounted for, when it is considered that if, as we have proved, baptism took the place of circumcision, the baptism of infants was so much a matter of course, as to call for no remark. The argument from silence on this subject is one which least of all the Baptists ought to dwell upon, since, as we have seen, if it had been intended to exclude children from the privilege of being placed in covenant with God, which privilege they unquestionably enjoyed under the Old Testament, this extraordinary alteration, which could not but produce remark, required to be particularly noted, both to account for it to the mind of an affectionate Jewish parent, and to guard against that mistake into which we shall just now show Christians from the earliest times fell, since they administered baptism to infants. It may further be observed, that, as to the Acts of the Apostles, the events narrated there did not require the express mention of the baptism of infants, as an act separate from the baptism of adults. That which called for the administration of baptism at that period, as now, when the Gospel is preached in a heathen land, was the believing of adult persons, not the case of persons already believing, bringing their children for baptism. On the supposition that baptism was administered to the children of the parents who thus believed, at the same time as themselves, and in consequence of their believing, it may be asked how the fact could be more naturally expressed, when it was not intended to speak of infant baptism *doctrinally* or *distinctly*, than that such a one was baptized, "and all his *house*;" just as a similar fact would be distinctly recorded by a modern Missionary writing to a Church at home practising infant baptism, and having no controversy on the subject in his eye, by saying that he baptized such a Heathen, at such a place, with all his *family*. For, without going into any criticism on the Greek term rendered *house*, it cannot be denied that, like the old English word employed in our translation, and also like the word *family*, it must be understood to comprehend either the children only, to the exclusion of the domestics, or both.

If we take the instances of the baptism of whole "houses," as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, they must be understood as

marking the common mode of proceeding among the first preachers of the Gospel when the head or heads of a family believed, or as insulated and peculiar instances. If the former, which, from what may be called the matter of course manner in which the cases are mentioned, is most probable ; then innumerable instances must have occurred of the baptizing of houses or families, just as many in fact as there were of the conversion of heads of families in the apostolic age. That the majority of these houses must have included infant children is therefore certain, and it follows that the Apostles practised infant baptism.

But let the cases of the baptism of *houses* mentioned in the New Testament be put in the most favourable light for the purpose of the Baptists ; that is, let them be considered as insulated and peculiar, and not as *instances* of apostolic procedure in all cases where the heads of families were converted to the faith, still the Baptist is obliged to assume, that neither in the house of the Philippian jailer, nor in that of Lydia, nor in that of Stephanas, were there any infants at all, since, if there were, they were comprehended in the *whole* houses which were baptized upon the believing of their respective heads. This at least is improbable, and no intimation of this peculiarity is given in the history.

The Baptist writers, however, think that they can prove that all the persons included in these houses were adults ; and that the means of showing this from the Scriptures is an instance of “the care of Providence watching over the sacred cause of adult baptism ;” thus absurdly assuming that even if this point could be made out the whole controversy is terminated, when in fact this is but an auxiliary argument of very inferior importance to those above-mentioned. But let us examine their supposed proofs. “With respect to the jailer,” they tell us, that “we are expressly assured, that the Apostles spoke the word of the Lord to all that were in his house ;” which we grant must principally, although not of necessity exclusively, refer to those who were of sufficient age to understand their discourse. And “that he rejoiced, believing in God with all his house ;” from which the inference is, that none but adult hearers, and adult believers, were in this case baptized. If so, then there could be no infant children in the house ; which, as the jailer appears from his activity to have been a man in the vigour of life, and not aged, is at least far from being certain. But if it be a *proof* in this case that there were no infant children in the jailer’s family, that it is said, he believed and *all his house* ; this is not the only believing family mentioned in Scripture from which infants must be excluded. For, to say nothing of the houses of Lydia

and Stephanas, the nobleman at Capernaum is said to have believed “and *all his house*,” John iv, 53; so that we are to conclude that there were no infant children in this house also, although his sick son is not said to be his only offspring, and that son is called by him a *child*, the diminutive term *παιδιον* being used. Again, Cornelius is said, Acts x, 2, to be “one that feared God, and *all his house*.” Infant children therefore must be excluded from his family also; and also from that of Crispus, who is said to have “believed on the Lord with *all his house*,” which *house* appears, from what immediately follows, to have been baptized. These instances make it much more probable that the phrases “fearing God with all his house,” and “believing with all his house,” include young children under the believing adults, whose religious profession they would follow, and whose sentiments they would imbibe, so that they might be called a Christian family, than that so many houses or families should have been constituted only of adult persons, to the entire exclusion of children of tender years. In the case of the jailer’s house, however, the Baptist argument manifestly halts; for it is not said, that they only to whom the word of the Lord was spoken were baptized; nor that they only who “believed” and “rejoiced” with the jailer were baptized. The account of the baptism is given in a separate verse, and in different phrase: “And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes, and was baptized, he, *and all his*,” all belonging to him, “straightway;” where there is no limitation of the persons who were baptized to the adults only by any terms which designate them as persons “hearing,” or “believing.”

The next instance is that of Lydia. The words of the writer of the Acts are, “Who when she was baptized, and her *house*.” The great difficulty of the Baptists is, to make a house for Lydia without any children at all, young or old. This, however, cannot be proved from the term itself, since the same word is that commonly used in the Scripture to include children residing at home with their parents: “One that ruleth well his own *house*, having his *children* in subjection with all gravity.” It is however conjectured, first, that she had come a trading voyage, from Thyatira to Philippi, to sell purple; as if a woman of Thyatira might not be settled in business at Philippi as a seller of this article. Then, as if to mark more strikingly the hopelessness of the attempt to torture this passage to favour an opinion, “her house” is made to consist of journeymen dyers, “employed in preparing the purple she sold;” which, however, is a notion at variance with the former; for if she was on a mere trading voyage, if she had brought her purple goods



from Thyatira to Philippi to sell, she most probably brought them ready dyed, and would have no need of a dying establishment. To complete the whole, these journeymen dyers, although not a word is said of their conversion, nor even of their existence, in the whole story, are raised into "the brethren," (a term which manifestly denotes the members of the Philippian Church,) whom Paul and Silas are said to have seen and comforted in the house of Lydia, before they departed !

All, however, that the history states is, that "the Lord opened Lydia's heart, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul," and that she was therefore "baptized and her house." From this house no one has the least authority to exclude children, even young children, since there is nothing in the history to warrant the above mentioned conjectures, and the word is in Scripture used expressly to include them. All is perfectly gratuitous on the part of the Baptists ; but, whilst there is nothing to sanction the manner in which they deal with this text, there is a circumstance strongly confirmatory of the probability that the house of Lydia, according to the natural import of the word rendered house or family, contained children, and that in an infantile state. This is, that in all the other instances in which adults are mentioned as having been baptized along with the head of a family, they are mentioned as "hearing," and "believing," or in some terms which amount to this. Cornelius had called together "his kinsmen and near friends ;" and while Peter spake, "the Holy Ghost fell on all them *which heard the word*," "and he commanded them to be baptized." So the adults in the house of the jailer at Philippi were persons to whom "the word of the Lord" was spoken ; and although nothing is said of the faith of any but the jailer himself,—for the words are more properly rendered, "and he, believing in God, rejoiced with all his house,"—yet is the joy which appears to have been felt by the adult part of his house, as well as by himself, to be attributed to their faith. Now, as it does not appear that the Apostles, although they baptized infant children, baptized unbelieving adult servants because their masters or mistresses believed, and yet the *house* of Lydia were baptized along with herself, when no mention at all is made of the Lord "opening the heart" of these adult domestics, nor of their believing, the fair inference is, that "the house" of Lydia means her children only, and that being of immature years they were baptized with their mother according to the common custom of the Jews, to baptize the children of proselyted Gentiles along with their parents, from which practice Christian baptism appears to have been taken.

The third instance is that of "the house of Stephanas," mentioned by St. Paul, 1 Cor. i, 16, as having been baptized by himself. This family also, it is argued, must have been all adults, because they are said in the same Epistle, chap. xvi, 15, to have "addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints," and further, because they were persons who took "*a lead*" in the affairs of the Church, the Corinthians being exhorted to "submit themselves unto such, and to every one that helpeth with us and laboureth." To understand this passage rightly, it is however necessary to observe, that Stephanas, the head of this family, had been sent by the Church of Corinth to St. Paul at Ephesus, along with Fortunatus and Achaicus. In the absence of the head of the family, the Apostle commends "the house," the family, of Stephanas to the regard of the Corinthian believers, and perhaps also the houses of the two other brethren who had come with him; for in several MSS. marked by Griesbach, and in some of the versions, the text reads, "Ye know the house of Stephanas and Fortunatus," and one reads also, "and of Achaicus." By the house or family of Stephanas, the Apostle must mean his children, or, along with them, his near relations dwelling together in the same family; for, since they are commended for their hospitality to the saints, servants, who have no power to show hospitality, are of course excluded. But, in the absence of the head of the family, it is very improbable that the Apostle should exhort the Corinthian Church to "submit," ecclesiastically, to the wife, sons, daughters, and near relations of Stephanas, and, if the reading of Griesbach's MSS. be followed, to the family of Fortunatus, and that of Achaicus also. In respect of government, therefore, they cannot be supposed "to have had a *lead* in the Church," according to the Baptist notion, and especially as the heads of these families were absent. They were however the oldest Christian families in Corinth, the house of Stephanas at least being called "the first fruits of Achaia," and eminently distinguished for "addicting themselves," *setting themselves on system*, to the work of ministering to the saints, that is, of communicating to the poor saints; entertaining stranger Christians, which was an important branch of practical duty in the primitive Church, that in every place those who professed Christ might be kept out of the society of idolaters; and receiving the ministers of Christ. On these accounts the Apostle commends them to the special regard of the Corinthian Church, and exhorts "να και υμεις υποτασσησθε τοις τοιςτοις, that you range yourselves under and co-operate with them, and with every one," also, "who helpeth with us, and laboureth;" the military metaphor contained in *εταξαν* in the preceding verse

being here carried forward. These families were the oldest Christians in Corinth; and as they were foremost in every good word and work, they were not only to be commended, but the rest were to be exhorted to serve under them as leaders in these works of charity. This appears to be the obvious sense of this otherwise obscure passage. But in this, or indeed in any other sense which can be given to it, it proves no more than that there were adult persons in the family of Stephanas, his wife, and sons, and daughters, who were distinguished for their charity and hospitality. Still it is to be remembered, that the baptism of the oldest of the children took place several years before. The house of Stephanas "was the first fruits of Achaia," in which St. Paul began to preach not later than A. D. 51, whilst this Epistle could not be written earlier at least than A. D. 57, and might be later. Six or eight years, taken from the age of the sons and daughters of Stephanas, might bring the oldest to the state of early youth, and as to the younger branches would descend to the term of infancy, properly so called. Still further, all that the Apostle affirms of the benevolence and hospitality of the family of Stephanas is perfectly consistent with a part of his children being still very young when he wrote the Epistle. An equal commendation for hospitality and charity might be given in the present day, with perfect propriety, to many pious families, several members of which are still in a state of infancy. It was sufficient to warrant the use of such expressions as those of the Apostle, that there were in these Corinthian families a few adults, whose conduct gave a decided character to the whole "house." Thus the argument used to prove that in these three instances of family baptism, there were no young children, are evidently very unsatisfactory; and they leave us to the conclusion, which perhaps all would come to in reading the sacred history, were they quite free from the bias of a theory, that "houses," or "families," as in the commonly received import of the term, must be understood to comprise children of all ages, unless some explicit note of the contrary appears, which is not the case in any of the instances in question.

5. The last argument may be drawn from the antiquity of the practice of infant baptism.

If the baptism of the infant children of believers was not practised by the Apostles and by the primitive Churches, when and where did the practice commence? To this question the Baptist writers can give no answer. It is an innovation, according to them, not upon the *circumstances* of a sacrament, but upon its *essential principle*; and yet its introduction produced no struggle;



was never noticed by any general or provincial council; and excited no controversy! This itself is strong presumptive proof of its *early* antiquity. On the other hand, we can point out the only ancient writer who opposed infant baptism. This was Tertullian, who lived late in the second century; but his very opposition to the practice proves, that that practice was more ancient than himself; and the principles on which he impugns it, further show that it was so. He regarded this sacrament superstitiously; he appended to it the *trine* immersion in the name of each of the persons of the Trinity; he gives it gravely as a reason why infants should not be baptized, that Christ says, "Suffer the little children to *come* unto me," therefore they must stay till they are able to come, that is, till they are grown up; "and he would prohibit the unmarried, and all in a widowed state, from baptism, because of the temptations to which they may be liable." The whole of this is solved by adverting to that notion of the efficacy of this sacrament in taking away all *previous* sins, which then began to prevail, so that an inducement was held out for delaying baptism as long as possible, till at length, in many cases, it was postponed to the article of death, under the belief that the dying who received this sacrament were the more secure of salvation. Tertullian, accordingly, with all his zeal, allowed that infants ought to be baptized *if their lives be in danger*, and thus evidently shows that his opposition to the baptism of infants in ordinary, rested upon a very different principle from that of the modern Anti-pædobaptists. Amidst all his arguments against this practice, Tertullian, however, never ventures upon one which would have been most to his purpose, and which might most forcibly have been urged had not baptism been administered to infants by the Apostles and their immediate successors. That argument would have been the *novelty* of the practice, which he never asserts, and which, as he lived so early, he might have proved, had he had any ground for it. On the contrary, Justin Martyr, and Irenæus, in the second century, and Origen in the beginning of the third, expressly mention infant baptism as the practice of their times, and, by the latter, this is assigned to apostolical injunction. Fidus, an African bishop, applied to Cyprian, bishop of Carthage, to know, not whether infants were to be baptized, but whether their baptism might take place before the eighth day after their birth, that being the day on which circumcision was performed by the law of Moses. This question was considered in an African synod, held A. D. 254, at which sixty-six bishops were present, and "it was unanimously decreed, 'that it was not necessary to defer baptism to that day; and that the grace

of God, or baptism, should be given to all, and especially to infants.” This decision was communicated in a letter, from Cyprian to Fidus.(4) We trace the practice also downwards. In the fourth century, Ambrose says, that “infants who are baptized, are reformed from wickedness to the primitive state of their nature ;”(5) and at the end of that century, the famous controversy took place between Augustine and Pelagius concerning original sin, in which the uniform practice of baptizing infants from the days of the Apostles was admitted by both parties, although they assigned different reasons for it. So little indeed were Tertullian’s absurdities regarded, that he appears to have been quite forgotten by this time ; for Augustine says he never heard of any Christian, catholic or sectary, who taught any other doctrine than that infants are to be baptized.(6) Infant baptism is not mentioned in the canons of any Council ; nor is it insisted upon as an object of faith in any creed ; and thence we infer that it was a point not controverted at any period of the ancient Church, and we know that it was the practice in all established Churches. Wall says, that Peter Bruis, a Frenchman, who lived about the year 1030, whose followers were called Petrobrusians, was the first Anti-pædobaptist teacher who had a regular congregation.(7) The Anabaptists of Germany took their rise in the beginning of the fifteenth century ; but it does not appear that there was any congregation of Anabaptists in England, till the year 1640.(8) That a practice which can be traced up to the very first periods of the Church, and has been, till within very modern times, its uncontradicted practice, should have a lower authority than Apostolic usage and appointment, may be pronounced impossible. It is not like one of those trifling, though somewhat superstitious, additions, which even in very early times began to be made to the sacraments ; on the contrary, it involves a principle so important as to alter the very nature of the sacrament itself. For if personal faith be an essential requisite of baptism in all cases ; if baptism be a visible declaration of this, and is vicious without it ; then infant baptism was an innovation of so serious a nature, that it must have attracted attention, and provoked controversy, which would have led, if not to the suppression of the error, yet to a diversity of practice in the ancient Churches, which in point of fact did not exist, Tertullian himself allowing infant baptism in extreme cases.

The BENEFITS of this sacrament require to be briefly exhibited. Baptism introduces the adult believer into the covenant of grace,

(4) Cyp. Ep. 59.

(5) Comment. in Lucam, c. 10.

(6) De Pecc. Mor.

cap. 6.

(7) Hist. Part 2, c. 7.

(8) BISHOP TOMLINE’S Elements.

and the Church of Christ; and is the seal, the pledge, to him, on the part of God, of the fulfilment of all its provisions, in time and in eternity; whilst, on his part, he takes upon himself the obligations of steadfast faith and obedience.

To the infant child, it is a visible reception into the same covenant and Church,—a pledge of acceptance through Christ,—the bestowment of a title to all the grace of the covenant as circumstances may require, and as the mind of the child may be capable, or made capable, of receiving it; and as it may be sought in future life by prayer, when the period of reason and moral choice shall arrive. It conveys also the present “blessing” of Christ, of which we are assured by his taking children in his arms, and blessing them; which blessing cannot be merely nominal, but must be substantial and efficacious. It secures, too, the gift of the Holy Spirit in those secret spiritual influences, by which the actual regeneration of those children who die in infancy is effected; and which are a *seed of life* in those who are spared, to prepare them for instruction in the word of God, as they are taught it by parental care, to incline their will and affections to good, and to begin and maintain in them the war against inward and outward evil, so that they may be divinely assisted, as reason strengthens, to make their calling and election sure. In a word, it is, both as to infants and to adults, the sign and pledge of that inward grace, which, although modified in its operations by the difference of their circumstances, has respect to, and flows from, a covenant relation to each of the three *persons* in whose *one name* they are baptized,—acceptance by the FATHER,—union with CHRIST as the head of his mystical body, the Church,—and “the communion of the HOLY GHOST.” To these advantages must be added the respect which God bears to the believing act of the parents, and to their solemn prayers on the occasion, in both which the child is interested; as well as in that solemn engagement of the parents which the rite necessarily implies, to bring up their child in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

To the parents it is a benefit also. It assures them that God will not only be their God; but “the God of their seed after them;” it thus gives them, as the Israelites of old, the right to covenant with God for their “little ones,” and it is a consoling pledge that their dying infant offspring shall be saved; since he who says, “Suffer little children to come unto me,” has added, “for of such is the kingdom of heaven.” They are reminded by it also of the necessity of acquainting themselves with God’s covenant, that they may diligently teach it to their children; and that, as they have covenanted with God for their children, they are



bound thereby to enforce the covenant conditions upon them as they come to years,—by *example*, as well as by education; by *prayer*, as well as by profession of the name of Christ.

III. The *MODE* of baptism remains to be considered.

Although the manner in which the element of water is applied in baptism is but a circumstance of this sacrament, it will not be a matter of surprise to those who reflect upon the proneness of men to attach undue importance to comparative trifles, that it has produced so much controversy. The question as to the proper *subjects* of baptism is one which is to be respected for its importance; that as to the *mode* has occupied more time, and excited greater feeling, than it is in any view entitled to. It cannot, however, be passed over, because the advocates for immersion are often very troublesome to their fellow Christians, unsettle weak minds, and sometimes perhaps, from their zeal for a form, endanger their own spirituality. Against the doctrine that the only legitimate mode of baptizing is by immersion, we may first observe that there are several strong *presumptions*.

1. It is not probable, that if immersion were the only allowable mode of baptism, it should not have been expressly enjoined.

2. It is not probable, that in a religion designed to be universal, a mode of administering this ordinance should be obligatory, the practice of which is ill adapted to so many climates, where it would either be exceedingly harsh to immerse the candidates, male and female, strong and feeble, in water; or, in some places, as in the higher latitudes, for a great part of the year, impossible. Even if immersion were in fact the original mode of baptizing in the name of Christ, these reasons make it improbable that no accommodation of the form should take place, without vitiating the ordinance. This some of the stricter Baptists assert, although they themselves depart from the primitive mode of partaking of the Lord's Supper, in accommodation to the customs of their country.

3. It is still more unlikely, that in a religion of mercy there should be no consideration of health and life in the administration of an ordinance of salvation, since it is certain that in countries where cold bathing is little practised, great risk of both is often incurred, especially in the case of women and delicate persons of either sex, and fatal effects do sometimes occur.

4. It is also exceedingly improbable, that in such circumstances of climate, and the unfrequent use of the bath, a mode of baptizing should have been appointed, which, from the shivering, the sobbing, and other bodily uneasiness produced, should distract the

thoughts, and unfit the mind for a collected performance of a religious and solemn act of devotion.

5. It is highly improbable that the three thousand converts at the Pentecost, who, let it be observed, were baptized on the same day, were all baptized by immersion; or that the jailer and "all his" were baptized in the same manner *in the night*, although the Baptists have invented "a tank or bath in the prison at Philippi" for that purpose.

Finally, it is most of all improbable, that a religion like the Christian, so scrupulously delicate, should have enjoined the immersion of women by men, and in the presence of men. In an after age, when immersion came into fashion, baptisteries, and rooms for women, and changes of garments, and other auxiliaries to this practice, came into use, because they were found necessary to decency; but there could be no such conveniences in the first instance; and accordingly we read of none. With all the arrangements of modern times, baptism by immersion is not a decent practice; there is not a female, perhaps, who submits to it, who has not a great previous struggle with her delicacy; but that, at a time when no such accommodations could be had as have since been found necessary, such a ceremony should have been constantly performing wherever the Apostles and first preachers went, and that at pools and rivers, in the presence of many spectators, and they sometimes unbelievers and scoffers, is a thing not rationally credible.

We grant that the practice of immersion is ancient; and so are many other superstitious appendages to baptism, which were adopted under the notion of making the rite more emblematical and impressive. We not only trace immersion to the second century, but immersion three times, anointing with oil, signing with the sign of the cross, imposition of hands, exorcism, eating milk and honey, putting on of white garments, all connected with baptism, and first mentioned by Tertullian; the invention of men like himself, who with much genius and eloquence had little judgment, and were superstitious to a degree worthy of the darkest ages which followed. It was this authority for immersion which led Wall, and other writers on the side of infant baptism, to surrender the point to the Anti-pædobaptists, and to conclude that immersion was the Apostolic practice. Several national Churches too, like our own, swayed by the same authority, are favourable to immersion, although they do not think it binding, and generally practise effusion or sprinkling.

Neither Tertullian nor Cyprian was, however, so strenuous for

immersion as to deny the validity of baptism by aspersion or effusion. In cases of sickness or weakness they only sprinkled water upon the face, which we suppose no modern Baptist would allow. Clinic baptism too, or the baptism of the sick in bed, by aspersion, is allowed by Cyprian to be valid; so that "if the persons recover they need not be baptized by immersion." (9) Gemadius of Marseilles, in the fifth century, says, that baptism was administered in the Gallic Church, in his time, indifferently by immersion or by sprinkling. In the thirteenth century, Thomas Aquinas says, "that baptism may be given, not only by immersion, but also by effusion of water, or sprinkling with it." And Erasmus affirms, (1) that in his time it was the custom to sprinkle infants in Holland and to dip them in England. Of these two modes, one only was primitive and Apostolic. Which that was we shall just now consider. At present it is only necessary to observe, that immersion is not the only mode which can plead antiquity in its favour; and that, as the *superstition* of antiquity appears to have gone most in favour of baptism by immersion, this is a circumstance which affords a strong presumption, that it was one of those additions to the ancient rite which superstition originated. This may be made out almost to a moral certainty, without referring at all to the argument from Scripture. The "*ancient Christians*," the "*primitive Christians*," as they are called by the advocates of immersion, that is, Christians of about the age of Tertullian and Cyprian, and a little downward,—whose practice of immersion is used as an argument to prove that mode only to have had Apostolic sanction,—baptized the candidates *NAKED*. Thus Wall in his History of Baptism: "The ancient Christians, when they were baptized by immersion, were all baptized *naked*, whether they were men, women, or children. They thought it better represented the putting off of the old man, and also the nakedness of Christ on the cross; moreover, as baptism is a washing, they judged it should be the washing of the body, not of the clothes." This is an instance of the manner in which they affected to *improve* the emblematical character of the ordinance. Robinson also, in his History of Baptism, states the same thing: "Let it be observed, that the primitive Christians baptized *naked*. There is no ancient historical fact better authenticated than this." "They, however," says Wall, "took great care for preserving the modesty of any woman who was to be baptized. None but women came near till her body was in the water; then the Priest came, and putting her

(9) Epist. 69.

(1) Epist. 76.



head also under water, he departed, and left her to the women." Now, if antiquity be pleaded as a proof that immersion was the really *primitive* mode of baptizing, it must be pleaded in favour of the gross and offensive circumstance of baptizing naked, which was considered of as much importance as the other; and then we may safely leave it for any one to say whether he really believes that the three thousand persons mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles were baptized *naked*? and whether, when St. Paul baptized Lydia, she was put into the water naked by her women, and that the Apostle then hastened "to put her head under water also, using the form of baptism, and retired, leaving her to the women" to take her away to dress? Immersion, with all its appendages, dipping three times, nakedness, unction, the eating of milk and honey, exorcism, &c, bears manifest marks of that disposition to *improve* upon God's ordinances, for which even the close of the second century was remarkable, and which laid the foundation of that general corruption which so speedily followed.

But we proceed to the New Testament itself, and deny that a single clear case of baptism by immersion can be produced from it.

The word itself, as it has been often shown, proves nothing. The verb, with its derivatives, signifies to dip the hand into a dish, Matt. xxvi, 23; to stain a vesture with blood, Rev. xix, 13; to wet the body with dew, Dan. iv, 33; to paint or smear the face with colours; to stain the hand by pressing a substance; to be overwhelmed in the waters as a sunken ship; to be drowned by falling into water; to sink, in the neuter sense; to immerse totally; to plunge up to the neck; to be immersed up to the middle; to be drunken with wine; to be dyed, tinged, and imbued; to wash by effusion of water; to pour water upon the hands, or any other part of the body; to sprinkle. A word then of such large application affords as good proof for sprinkling, or partial dipping, or washing with water, as for immersion in it. The controversy on this accommodating word has been carried on to weariness; and if even the advocates of immersion could prove, what they have not been able to do, that plunging is the *primary* meaning of the term, they would gain nothing, since, in Scripture, it is notoriously used to express other applications of water. The Jews had "divers baptisms" in their service; but these *washings* of the body in or with water, were not immersions, and in some instances they were mere *sprinklings*. The Pharisees "baptized before they ate," but this baptism was "the washing of hands," which in eastern countries is done by servants *pouring* water over them, and not by

*dipping* :—"Here is Elisha, the son of Shaphat, who *poured water on the hands* of Elijah," 2 Kings iii, 11 ; that is, who acted as his servant. In the same manner the feet were washed : "Thou gavest me no water *upon*, *ἐπι*, my feet," Luke vii, 44. Again, the Pharisees are said to have held the "washing" or baptism "of cups and pots, brazen vessels, and of tables ;" not certainly for the sake of cleanliness, (for all people hold the washing or baptism of such utensils for this purpose,) but from superstitious notions of purification. Now, as "sprinkling" is prescribed in the law of Moses, and was familiar to the Jews, as the mode of purification from uncleanness, as in the case of the sprinkling of the water of separation, Num. xix, 19, it is for this reason much more probable that the baptism of these vessels was effected by sprinkling, than by either pouring or immersion. But that they were not immersed, at least not the whole of them, may be easily made to appear ; and if "baptism" as to any of these utensils does not signify immersion, the argument from the use of the word must be abandoned. Suppose then, the pots, cups, and brazen vessels, to have been baptized by immersion ; the "beds" or couches used to recline upon at their meals, which they ate in an accumbent posture, couches which were constructed for three or five persons each to lie down upon, must certainly have been exempted from the operation of a "baptism" by dipping, which was probably practised, like the "baptism" of their hands, before every meal. The word is also used by the LXX, in Dan. iv, 33, where Nebuchadnezzar is said to have been wet with the dew of heaven, which was plainly effected, not by his immersion in dew, but by its descent upon him. Finally, it occurs in 1 Cor. x, 2, "And were *baptized* unto Moses in the *cloud* and in the *sea* ;" where also immersion is out of the case. The Israelites were not immersed in the sea, for they went through it, "as on *dry land* ;" and they were not immersed in the cloud, which was above them. In this case, if the spray of the sea is referred to, or the descent of rain from the cloud, they were baptized by sprinkling, or at most by pouring ; and that there is an allusion to the latter circumstance, is made almost certain by a passage in the song of Deborah, and other expressions in the Psalms, which speak of "rain," and the "pouring out of water," and "droppings" from the "cloud" which directed the march of the Jews in the wilderness. Whatever, therefore, the *primary* meaning of the verb "to baptize" may be, is a question of no importance on one side or the other. Leaving the mode of administering baptism, as a religious rite, out of the question, it is used generally, at least in the New Testament,

not to express immersion in water, but for the act of pouring or sprinkling it; and that baptism, when spoken of as a religious rite, is to be understood as administered by immersion, no satisfactory instance can be adduced.

The baptism of John is the first instance usually adduced in proof of this practice:—The multitudes who went out to him were “baptized of him IN Jordan;” they were therefore *immersed*.

To say nothing here of the laborious, and apparently impossible, task imposed upon John, of plunging the multitudes, who flocked to him day by day, into the river; and the indecency of the whole proceeding when women were also concerned; it is plain that the principal object of the Evangelist, in making this statement, was to point out the *place* where John exercised his ministry and baptized, and not to describe the mode; if the latter is at all referred to, it must be acknowledged that this was incidental to the other design. Now it so happens, that we have a passage which relates to John’s baptism, and which can only be fairly interpreted by referring to HIS MODE OF BAPTIZING, as the FIRST consideration; a passage, too, which John himself uttered at the very time he was baptizing “in Jordan.” “I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance; but he that cometh after me is mightier than I: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire.” Our translators, in this passage, aware of the absurdity of translating the preposition *en*, *in*, have properly rendered it *with*; but the advocates of immersion do not stumble at trifles, and boldly rush into the absurdity of Campbell’s translation, “I indeed baptize you *in* water, he will baptize you *in* the Holy Ghost and fire.” Unfortunately for this translation, we have not only the utter senselessness of the phrases *baptized*, *plunged* in the Holy Ghost, and *plunged* in fire, to set against it; but also the very history of the completion of this prophetic declaration, and that not only as to the *fact* that Christ did indeed baptize his disciples with the Holy Ghost and with fire, but also as to the *mode* in which this baptism was effected: “And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of *fire*, and it SAT UPON each of them. And they were all filled with THE HOLY GHOST.” Thus the baptism of the Holy Ghost and of fire was a descent UPON, and not an immersion INTO. With this too agree all the accounts of the baptism of the Holy Spirit: they are all *from above*, like the *pouring out* or *shedding* of water upon the head; nor is there any expression in Scripture which bears the most remote resemblance to *immersing*, *plunging* in the Holy Ghost. When our Lord received the baptism of the Holy Ghost, “the Spirit of God DESCENDED like a dove, and LIGHTED UPON



him." When Cornelius and his family received the same gift, "the Holy Ghost **FELL** on all them which heard the word;" "and they of the circumcision that believed were astonished, because that on the Gentiles *also* was **POURED OUT** the gift of the Holy Ghost," which, as the words imply, had been in like manner "*poured out* on them." The common phrase, to "*receive*" the Holy Ghost, is also inconsistent with the idea of being *immersed*, *plunged* into the Holy Ghost; and finally, when St. Paul connects the baptism with water, and the baptism with the Holy Ghost together, as in the words of John the Baptist just quoted, he expresses the mode of the baptism of the Spirit in the same manner: "According to his mercy he saved us by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which **HE SHED** ON US abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour," Titus iii, 5, 6. That the mode therefore in which John baptized was by *pouring water upon* his disciples, may be concluded from his using the same word to express the *pouring out*, the *descent*, of the Spirit upon the disciples of Jesus. For if baptism necessarily means immersion, and John baptized by immersion, then did not Jesus *baptize* his disciples with the Holy Ghost. He might *bestow* it upon them, but he did not *baptize* them with it, according to the Immersionists, since he only "*poured* it upon them," "*shed* it upon them," caused it "*to fall* upon them;" none of which, according to them, is baptism. It follows, therefore, that the prediction of John was never fulfilled, because, in their sense of baptizing, none of the disciples of Jesus mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles ever received the Holy Ghost but by *effusion*. This is the dilemma into which they put themselves. They must allow that baptism is not in this passage used for immersion; or they must deny that Jesus ever did *baptize* with the Holy Ghost.

To baptize "*in Jordan*," does not then signify to plunge in the river of Jordan. John made the neighbourhood of Jordan the principal place of his ministry. Either at the fountains of some favoured district, or at some river, baptize he must because of the multitudes who came to his baptism, in a country deficient in springs, and of water in general; but there are several ways of understanding the phrase "*in Jordan*," which give a sufficiently good sense, and involve no contradiction to the words of John himself, who makes his baptism an *effusion* of water, to answer to the *effusion* of the Holy Spirit, as administered by Jesus. It may be taken as a note of *place*, not of mode. "*In Jordan*," therefore, the expression of St. Matthew is, in St. John, "*IN Bethabara, beyond*," or situate on, "*Jordan, where John was baptizing*;" and

this seems all that the expression was intended to mark, and is the sense to be preferred. It is thus equivalent to "*at Jordan*," "*at Bethabara, situate on Jordan*;" *at* being a frequent sense of *ἐν*. Or it may signify that the water of Jordan was made use of by John for baptizing, however it might be applied; for we should think it no violent mode of expression to say that we washed ourselves *in* a river, although we should mean, not that we plunged ourselves into it, but merely that we took up the water in our hands, and applied it in the way of effusion. Or it may be taken to express his baptizing *in the bed* of the river, into which he must have descended with the baptized, in order to take up the water with his hand, or with some small vessel, as represented in ancient bas reliefs, to pour it out upon them. This would be the position of any baptizer using a river at all accessible by a shelving bank; and when within the bed of the stream, he might as truly be said to be *in* the river, when mere *place* was the principal thing to be pointed out, as if he had been immersed in the water. The Jordan in this respect is rather remarkable, having, according to Maundrell, an outermost bank formed by its occasional "swellings." The remark of this traveller is, "After having descended *the outermost bank*, you go *a furlong* upon a level strand, before you come to the immediate bank of the river." Any of these views of the import of the phrases "*in Jordan*," "*in the river of Jordan*," used plainly with intention to point out the *place* where John exercised his ministry, will sufficiently explain them, without involving us in the inextricable difficulties which embarrass the theory, that John baptized only by immersion. To go indeed to a river to baptize, would in such countries as our own, where water for the mere purpose of effusion may readily be obtained out of cisterns, pumps, &c, very naturally suggests to the simple reader, that the reason for John's choice of a river was, that it afforded the means of immersion. But in those countries the case was different. Springs, as we have said, were scarce, and the water for domestic purposes had to be fetched daily by the women in pitchers from the nearest rivers and fountains, which rendered the domestic supply scanty, and of course valuable. But even if this reason did not exist, baptism in rivers would not, as a matter of course, imply immersion. Of this we have an instance in the customs of the people of Mesopotamia, mentioned in the Journal of Wolfe, the Missionary. This sect of Christians call themselves "the followers of St. John the Baptist, who was a follower of Christ." Among many other questions, Mr. Wolfe inquired of one of them respecting their mode of baptism, and was answered,

“The Priests or Bishop baptize children thirty days old. They take the child to the banks of the *river*; a relative or friend holds the child near the surface of the water, while the Priest *sprinkles* the element upon the child, and with prayers they name the child.”(2) Mr. Wolfe asks, “Why do they baptize in rivers?” Answer: “Because St. John the Baptist baptized in the river Jordan.” The same account was given afterwards by one of their Bishops or High Priests: “They carry the children after thirty days to the river, the Priest says a prayer, the godfather takes the child to the river, while the Priest *sprinkles* it with water.” Thus we have in modern times *river* baptism without immersion; and among the Syrian Christians, though immersion is used, it does not take place till after the true baptismal rite, pouring water upon the child in the name of the Trinity, has been performed.

The second proof adduced by the Immersionists is taken from the baptism of our Lord, who is said, Matt. iii, 16, “to have gone up straightway *out of the water*.” Here, however, the preposition used signifies *from*, and ἀνέβη ἀπο τῆς ὑδάτος, is simply “he went up *from the water*.” We grant that this might have been properly said in whatever way the baptism had been previously performed; but then it certainly in itself affords no argument on which to build the notion of the immersion of our Saviour.

The great passage of the Immersionists, however, is Acts viii, 38, 39: “And they went down both *into* the water, both Philip and the Eunuch, and he baptized him; and when they were come up *out of the water*,” &c. This is relied upon as a decisive proof of the *immersion* and *emersion* of the Eunuch. If so, however, it proves too much; for nothing is said of the Eunuch which is not said of Philip, “They went down *BOTH into* the water,”—“and when *THEY* were come up *out of the water*;”—and so Philip must have immersed himself as well as the Eunuch. Nor will the prepositions determine the case; they would have been employed properly had Philip and the Eunuch gone *into* the water by partial or by entire immersion, and therefore come *out of* it on dry land; and with equal propriety, and according to the habitual use of the same prepositions by Greek writers, they would express going *to* the water, without going *into* it, and returning *from* it, and not *out of* it, for εἰς is spoken of place, and properly signifies *at*, or it indicates motion towards a certain *limit*, and, for any thing that appears to the contrary in the history of the Eunuch’s baptism, that *limit* may just as well be placed at the nearest verge of the water as in



the middle of it. Thus the LXX say, Isa. xxvi, 2, "The King sent Rabshakeh from Lachish, *εἰς*, to Jerusalem," certainly not *into* it, for the city was not captured. The sons of the Prophets "came, *εἰς*, to Jordan to cut wood," 2 Kings vi, 4. They did not, we suppose, go *into* the water to perform that work. Peter was bid to "go, *εἰς*, to the sea, and cast a hook," not surely to go *into* the sea; and our Lord, Matt. v, 1, "went up, *εἰς*, to a mountain," but not *into* it. The corresponding preposition *ἐκ*, which signifies, when used of place, *from*, *out of*, must be measured by the meaning of *εἰς*. When *εἰς* means *into*, then *ἐκ* means *out of*; but when it means simply *to*, then *ἐκ* can express no more than *from*. Thus this passage is nothing to the purpose of the Immersionists.

The next proof relied upon in favour of immersion, is John iii, 22, 23: "After these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judea, and there he tarried with them and baptized; and John also was baptizing in Ænon, near to Salim, because there was *much water* there, and they came and were baptized." The Immersionists can see no reason for either Jesus or John baptizing where there was *much water*, but that they plunged their converts. The true reason for this has however been already given. Where could the multitudes who came for baptism be assembled? Clearly, not in houses. The preaching was in the fields; and since the rite which was to follow a ministry which made such an impression, and drew together such crowds, was baptism, the necessity of the case must lead the Baptist to Jordan, or to some other district, where, if a river was wanting, fountains at least existed. The necessity was equal in this case, whether the mode of baptism were that of aspersion, of pouring, or of immersion.

The Baptists, however, have magnified Ænon, which signifies *the fountain of On*, into a place of "many and great waters." Unfortunately, however, no such powerful fountain, sending out many streams of water fit for plunging multitudes into, has ever been found by travellers, although the country has been often visited; and certainly if its streams had been of the copious and remarkable character assigned to them, they could not have vanished. It rather appears, however, that the "much water," or "many waters," in the text, refers rather to the whole tract of country, than to the fountain of ON itself; because it appears to be given by the Evangelist as the reason why Jesus and his disciples came into the same neighbourhood to baptize. Different baptisms were administered, and therefore in different places. The baptism administered by Jesus at this time was one of multitudes;

this appears from the remark of one of John's disciples to his Master, "He that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and ALL MEN come to him." The place or places too, where Jesus baptized, although in the same district, could not be very near, since John's disciple mentions the multitudes who came to be baptized by Jesus, or rather by his disciples, as a piece of information; and thus we find a reason for the mention of the much water, or many waters, with reference to the district of country itself, and not to the single fountain of On. The tract had probably many fountains in it, which, as being a peculiarity in a country not generally so distinguished, would lead to the use of the expression, "much water," although not one of these fountains or wells might be sufficient to allow of the plunging of numbers of people, and probably was not. Indeed if the disciples of Jesus baptized by immersion, the Immersionists are much more concerned to discover "much water," "many waters," "large and deep streams," somewhere else in the district than at Ænon; because it is plain from the narrative, that the number of candidates for John's baptism had greatly fallen off at that time, and that the people now generally flocked to Christ. Hence the remark of John, verse 30, when his disciples had informed him that Jesus was baptizing in the neighbourhood, and that "all men came to him,—*"He must increase, I must decrease."* Hence also the observation of the Evangelist in the first verse of the next chapter, "*The Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John.*"

As these instances all so plainly fail to serve the cause of immersion, we need not dwell upon the others. The improbability of three thousand persons being immersed on the day of Pentecost, has been already mentioned. The baptism of Saul, of Lydia, of the Philippian jailer, and of the family of Cornelius, are all instances of house baptism, and, for that reason, are still less likely to have been by plunging. The Immersionists, indeed, invent "tanks," or "baths," for this purpose, in all these houses; but, as nothing of the kind appears on the face of the history, or is even incidentally suggested, suppositions prove nothing.

Thus all the presumptions before mentioned, against the practice of immersion, lie full against it, without any relief from the Scriptures themselves. Not one instance can be shown of that practice from the New Testament; whilst, so far as baptism was emblematical of the pouring out of the Holy Spirit, the doctrine of immersion wholly destroys its significancy. In fact, if the true mode of baptism be immersion only, then must we wholly give up

the phrase, the *baptism* of the Holy Spirit, which in any other mode than that of *pouring* out was never administered.

The only argument left for the advocates of immersion is the supposed allusion to the mode of baptism contained in the words of St. Paul, Rom. vi, 3, 4: "Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death? Therefore we are *buried with him by baptism*, into death; that, like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." It is necessary, however, to quote the next verses also, which are dependent upon the foregoing, "For if we have been PLANTED together," still by baptism, "in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection; knowing this, that our old man is CRUCIFIED with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin," v, 5-7. Why then do not the advocates of immersion go forward to these verses, so inseparably connected with those they are so ready to quote, and show us a resemblance, not only between baptism by immersion, and being buried with Christ; but also between immersion, and being "planted with Christ?" If the allusion of the Apostle is to the planting of a young tree in the earth, there is clearly but a very partial, not a total immersion in the case; and if it be to GRAFTING a branch upon a tree, the resemblance is still more imperfect. Still further, as the Apostle in the same connexion speaks of our being "CRUCIFIED with Christ," and that also by baptism, why do they not show us how immersion in water resembles the nailing of a body to a cross?

But this striking and important text is not to be explained by a fancied resemblance between a burial, as they choose to call it, of the body in water, and the burial of Christ; as if a dip or a plunge could have any resemblance to that separation from the living, and that laying aside of a body in the sepulchre, which burial implies. This forced thought darkens and enervates the whole passage, instead of bringing forth its powerful sentiments into clearer view. The manifest object of the Apostle in the whole of this part of his Epistle, was to show, that the doctrine of justification by faith alone, which he had just been establishing, could not in any true believer lead to licentiousness of life. "What then shall we say? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid! How shall we that are DEAD to sin, live any longer therein?" The reason then which is given by the Apostle why true believers CANNOT continue in sin, is, that they are "DEAD to sin," which is his answer to the objection. Now, this mystical death to sin he pro-



ceeds to attribute to the INSTRUMENTALITY of baptism, taking it to be an act of that faith in Christ of which it was the external expression; and then he immediately runs into a favourite comparison, which under various forms occurs in his writings, sometimes accompanied with the same allusion to baptism, and sometimes referring only to "faith" as the instrument,—a comparison between the mystical death, burial, and resurrection of believers, and the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. This is the comparison of the text; not a comparison between our mystical death, and baptism; nor between baptism, and the death and burial of Christ; either of which lay wide of the Apostle's intention. Baptism, as an act of faith, is, in fact, expressly made, not a *figure* of the effects which follow, as stated in the text, but *the means* of effecting them. "Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his *death*;" we enter by this means into the experience of its efficacy in effecting a mystical death in us; in other words, WE DIE with him, or, as it is expressed in verse 6, "Our old man is *crucified with him*." Still further, "by baptism," *δια τῆς βαπτισματός, through, or by means of, baptism*, "we are BURIED with him;" we not only die to sin and the world, but we are separated wholly from it, as the body of Christ was separated from the living world, when laid in the sepulchre; the connexion between sin and the world and us is completely broken; and those who are buried and put out of sight are no longer reckoned among men; nay, as the slave (for the Apostle brings in this figure also) is by death and burial wholly put out of the power of his former master, so, "that we should not *serve sin*; for he that is dead is *freed* from sin." But we also mystically RISE with him; "that like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life," having new connexions, new habits, new enjoyments, and new hopes. We have a similar passage in Col. ii, 12, and it has a similar interpretation: "Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him, through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead." In the preceding verse the Apostle had been speaking of the mystical DEATH of Christians, under the phrase, "*putting off the body of the sins of the flesh*;" then, as in his Epistle to the Romans, he adds our mystical BURIAL with Christ, which is a heightened representation of death; and then also, our RISING again with Christ. Here too all these three effects are attributed to baptism as the means. We *put off the body* of sins "by the circumcision of Christ," that is, as we have seen, by Christian circumcision or baptism; we are *buried* with him by baptism;

being obviously used here, like  $\delta\iota\alpha$ , to denote the instrument ; and by baptism we *rise* with him into a new life.

Now, to institute a comparison between a mode of baptism and the burial of Christ, wholly destroys the meaning of the passage ; for how can the Apostle speak of baptism as an *emblem* of Christ's burial, when he argues from it as the instrument of our *death* unto sin, and separation from it by a mystical burial ? Nor is baptism here made use of as the emblem of our own spiritual death, burial, and resurrection. As an emblem, even immersion, though it might put forth a clumsy type of burial and rising again, is wanting in not being emblematical of DEATH ; and yet all three, our mystical *death*, *burial*, and *rising again*, are distinctly spoken of, and must all be found represented in some TYPE. But the TYPE made use of by the Apostle is manifestly not baptism, but the death, the burial, and the resurrection of our Lord ; and in this view he pursues this bold and impressive figure to even the verge of allegory, in the succeeding verses : " For he that is dead is freed from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him : Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more ; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once ; but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God ; LIKEWISE reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

In the absence therefore of all proof, that, in any instance found in the New Testament, baptism was administered by immersion ; with so many presumptions against that indecent practice as have been stated ; with the decisive evidence also of a *designed* correspondence between the baptism, *the pouring out*, of the Holy Spirit, and the baptism, *the pouring out*, of water ; we may conclude, with confidence, that the latter was the Apostolic mode of administering that ordinance ; and that first washing, and then immersion, were introduced later, towards the latter end of the second century, along with several other superstitious additions to this important sacrament, originating in that " will-worship" which presumed to destroy the simplicity of God's ordinances, under pretence of (3) rendering them more emblematical and impressive.

(3) Baptism, as an emblem, points out, 1. The washing away of the guilt and pollution of sin. 2. The pouring out of the Holy Spirit. In Scripture it is made an emblem of these two, and of these only. Some of the superstitions above alluded to sin therefore by *excess* ; but immersion sins by *defect*. It retains the emblematical character of the rite as to the washing away of sin ; but it *loses it entirely as to the gift of the Holy Ghost* ; and, beyond the washing away of sin, is an emblem of

Even if immersion had been the original mode of baptizing, we should, in the absence of any command on the subject, direct or implied, have thought the Church at liberty to accommodate the manner of applying water to the body in the name of the Trinity, in which the essence of the rite consists, to different climates and manners; but it is satisfactory to discover that all the attempts made to impose upon Christians a practice repulsive to the feelings, dangerous to the health, and offensive to delicacy, is destitute of all scriptural authority, and of really primitive practice.

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## CHAPTER IV.

### THE INSTITUTIONS OF THE CHURCH.—THE LORD'S SUPPER.

THE agreement and difference between baptism and the Lord's Supper are well stated by the Church of Scotland in its Catechism: "The sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper agree; in that the author of both is God; the spiritual part of both is Christ and his benefits; both are seals of the same covenant; to be dispensed by Ministers of the Gospel, and none other; and to be continued in the Church of Christ until his second coming." "These sacraments differ, in that baptism is to be administered but once with water,—and that even to infants; whereas the Lord's Supper is to be administered often, in the elements of bread and wine, to represent and exhibit Christ as spiritual nourishment to the soul, and to confirm our continuance and growth in him, and that only to such as are of years and ability to examine themselves."

As baptism was substituted for circumcision, so the Lord's Supper was put by our Saviour in the place of the Passover; and was instituted immediately after celebrating that ordinance for the last time with his disciples. The Passover was an eminent type of our Lord's sacrifice and of its benefits; and since he was about to fulfil that symbolical rite which from age to age had continued to exhibit it to the faith and hope of ancient saints, it could have

nothing for which we have any scriptural authority to make it emblematical. Immersion, therefore, as distinct from every other mode of applying water to the body, means nothing. To say that it figures our spiritual death and resurrection, has, we have seen, no authority from the texts used to prove it; and to make a sudden pop under water to be emblematical of burial, is as far-fetched a conceit as any which adorns the Emblems of Quarles, without any portion of the ingenuity.



no place under the new dispensation. Christ in person became the true Passover ; and a new rite was necessary to commemorate the spiritual deliverance of men, and to convey and confirm its benefits. The circumstances of its institution are explanatory of its nature and design.

On the night when the first-born of Egypt were slain, the children of Israel were commanded to take a lamb for every house, to kill it, and to sprinkle the blood upon the posts of their doors, so that the destroying angel might *pass over* the houses of all who had attended to this injunction. Not only were the first-born children thus preserved alive, but the effect was the deliverance of the whole nation from their bondage in Egypt, and their becoming the visible Church and people of God by virtue of a special covenant. In commemoration of these events, the feast of the Passover was made annual, and at that time all the males of Judea assembled before the Lord in Jerusalem ; a lamb was provided for every house ; the blood was poured under the altar by the Priests, and the lamb was eaten by the people in their tents or houses. At this domestic and religious feast, every master of a family took the cup of thanksgiving, and gave thanks with his family to the God of Israel. As soon, therefore, as our Lord, acting as the master of his family, the disciples, had finished this the usual paschal ceremony, he proceeded to a new and distinct action : “ He took bread,” the bread then on the table, “ and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave it to them, saying, This is my body which is given for you ; this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after supper,” the cup with the wine which had been used in the paschal supper, “ saying, This cup is the New Testament in my blood, which is shed for you ;” or, as it is expressed by St. Matthew, “ and he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it ; for this is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.”

That this was the institution of a standing rite, and not a temporary action to be confined to the disciples then present with him, is made certain from 1 Cor. xi, 23–26 : “ For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks he brake it, and said, Take, eat, this is my body, which is broken for you ; this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the New Testament in my blood ; this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye

eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come." From these words we learn, 1. That St. Paul received a special revelation as to this ordinance, which must have had a higher object than the mere commemoration of an historical fact, and must be supposed to have been made for the purpose of enjoining it upon him to establish this rite in the Churches raised up by him, and of enabling him rightly to understand its authority and purport, where he found it already appointed by the first founders of the first Churches. 2. That the command of Christ, "This do in remembrance of me," which was originally given to the disciples present with Christ at the last Passover, is laid by St. Paul upon the Corinthians. 3. That he regarded the Lord's Supper as a rite to be "*often*" celebrated, and that in all future time until the Lord himself should "come" to judge the world. The perpetual obligation of this ordinance cannot therefore be reasonably disputed.

Of the nature of this great and affecting rite of Christianity, different and very opposite opinions have been formed, arising partly from the elliptical and figurative modes of expression adopted by Christ at its institution; but more especially from the influence of superstition upon some, and the extreme of affected rationalism upon others.

The first is the monstrous theory of the Church of Rome, as contradictory to the Holy Scriptures, whose words it professes to receive in their literal meaning, as it is revolting to the senses and reason of mankind.

"It is conceived that the words, 'This is my body; This is my blood,' are to be understood in their most literal sense; that when Jesus pronounced these words, he changed, by his almighty power, the bread upon the table into his body, and the wine into his blood, and really delivered his body and blood into the hands of his Apostles; and that at all times when the Lord's Supper is administered, the Priest, by pronouncing these words with a good intention, has the power of making a similar change. This change is known by the name of transubstantiation; the propriety of which name is conceived to consist in this, that although the bread and wine are not changed in figure, taste, weight, or any other accident, it is believed that the substance of them is completely destroyed; that in place of it, the substance of the body and blood of Christ, although clothed with all the sensible properties of bread and wine, is truly present; and that the persons who receive what has been consecrated by pronouncing these words, do not receive bread and wine, but literally partake of the body

and blood of Christ, and really eat his flesh, and drink his blood. It is further conceived, that the bread and wine thus changed, are presented by the Priest to God; and he receives the name of Priest, because in laying them upon the altar he offers to God a sacrifice, which, although it be distinguished from all others by being without the shedding of blood, is a true propitiatory sacrifice for the sins of the dead and of the living,—the body and blood of Christ, which were presented on the cross, again presented in the sacrifice of the mass. It is conceived, that the materials of this sacrifice, being truly the body and blood of Christ, possess an intrinsic virtue, which does not depend upon the disposition of him who receives them, but operates immediately upon all who do not obstruct the operation by a mortal sin. Hence it is accounted of great importance for the salvation of the sick and dying, that parts of these materials should be sent to them; and it is understood that the practice of partaking in private of a small portion of what the Priest has thus transubstantiated, is, in all respects, as proper and salutary as joining with others in the Lord's Supper. It is further conceived, that as the bread and wine, when converted into the [body and] blood of Christ, are a natural object of reverence and adoration to Christians, it is highly proper to worship them upon the altar; and that it is expedient to carry them about in solemn procession, that they may receive the homage of all who meet them. What had been transubstantiated was therefore lifted up for the purpose of receiving adoration, both when it was shown to the people at the altar, and when it was carried about. Hence arose that expression in the Church of Rome, the elevation of the host, *elevatio hostiæ*. But, as the wine in being carried about was exposed to accidents inconsistent with the veneration due to the body and blood of Christ, it became customary to send only the bread; and, in order to satisfy those who for this reason did not receive the wine, they were taught that, as the bread was changed into the body of Christ, they partook by concomitancy of the blood with the body. In process of time, the people were not allowed to partake of the cup; and it was said, that, when Jesús spake these words, 'Drink ye all of it,' he was addressing himself only to his Apostles, so that his command was fulfilled when the Priests, the successors of the Apostles, drank of the cup, although the people were excluded. And thus the last part of this system conspired with the first in exalting the Clergy very far above the laity. For the same persons who had the power of changing bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ, and who presented what they had thus made, as a sacrifice for the sins of others,



enjoyed the partaking of the cup, while communion in one kind only was permitted to the people.”(4)

So violently are these notions opposed to the common sense of mankind, that the ground to which the Romish writers have always been driven in their defence, is the authority of their Church, and the necessity of implicit faith in its interpretations of Scripture; principles which shut out the use of Scripture entirely, and open the door to every heresy and fanatical folly. But for the ignorance and superstition of Europe during the middle ages, this monstrous perversion of a sacred rite could not have been effected, and even then it was not established as an article of faith without many struggles. Almost all writers on the Protestant controversy will furnish a sufficient confutation of this capital attempt to impose upon the credulity of mankind; and to them, should it need any refutation, the reader may be referred.

The mind of Luther, so powerful to throw off dogmas which had nothing but human authority to support them, was, as to the sacrament, held in the bonds of early association. He concluded that the body and blood of Christ are really present in the Lord's Supper; but, aware of the absurdities and self-contradictions of transubstantiation, he laid hold of a doctrine which some writers, in the Romish Church itself, had continued to prefer to the papal dogma above stated. This was designated by the term *consubstantiation*, which allows that the bread and wine remain the same after consecration as before. Thus he escapes the absurdity of contradicting the very senses of men. It was held, however, by Luther, that though the bread and wine remain unchanged, yet that, *together with them*, the body and blood of Christ are *literally* received by the communicants. Some of his immediate followers did not, however, admit more on this point, than that the body and blood of Christ were really present in the sacrament; but that the manner of that presence was an inexplicable mystery. Yet, in some important respects, Luther and the Consubstantialists wholly escaped the errors of the Church of Rome as to this sacrament. They denied that it was a sacrifice; and that the presence of the body and blood of Christ gave to it any physical virtue acting independently of the disposition of the receiver; and that it rendered the elements the objects of adoration. Their error, therefore, may be considered rather of a speculative than of a practical nature; and was adopted probably in deference to what was conceived to be the literal meaning of the words of Christ when the Lord's Supper was instituted.

A third view was held by some of Luther's contemporaries, which has been thus described : " Carolostadt, a professor with Luther in the University of Wittenberg, and Zuinglius, a native of Switzerland, the founder of the Reformed Churches, or those Protestant Churches which are not Lutheran, taught that the bread and wine in the Lord's Supper are the signs of the absent body and blood of Christ ; that when Jesus said, ' This is my body, This is my blood,' he used a figure exactly of the same kind with that, by which, according to the abbreviations continually practised in ordinary speech, the sign is often put for the thing signified. As this figure is common, so there were two circumstances which would prevent the Apostles from misunderstanding it, when used in the institution of the Lord's Supper. The one was, that they saw the body of Jesus then alive, and therefore could not suppose that they were eating it. The other was, that they had just been partaking of a Jewish festival, in the institution of which the very same figure had been used. For in the night in which the children of Israel escaped out of Egypt, God said of the lamb which he commanded every house to eat and slay, ' It is the Lord's passover ;' (5) not meaning that it was the action of the Lord passing over every house, but the token and pledge of that action. It is admitted by all Christians, that there is such a figure used in one part of the institution. When our Lord says, ' This cup is the new covenant in my blood,' none suppose him to mean the cup is the covenant, but all believe that he means to call it the memorial, or the sign, or the seal of the covenant. If it be understood, that, agreeably to the analogy of language, he uses a similar figure when he says, ' This is my body,' and that he means nothing more than, ' This is the sign of my body,' we are delivered from all the absurdities implied in the literal interpretation, to which the Roman Catholics think it necessary to adhere. We give the words a more natural interpretation than the Lutherans do, who consider ' This is my body, as intended to express a proposition which is totally different, ' My body is with this ;' and we escape from the difficulties in which they are involved by their forced interpretation.

" Farther, by this method of interpretation, there is no ground left for that adoration which the Church of Rome pays to the bread and wine ; for they are only the signs of that which is believed to be absent. There is no ground for accounting the Lord's Supper, to the dishonour of ' the High Priest of our profession,' a new sacrifice presented by an earthly Priest ; for the bread and wine are only the memorials of that sacrifice which was once offered on the

cross. And, lastly, this interpretation destroys the Popish idea of a physical virtue in the Lord's Supper; for if the bread and wine are signs of what is absent, their use must be to excite the remembrance of it; but this is a use which cannot possibly exist with regard to any, but those whose minds are thereby put into a proper frame; and therefore the Lord's Supper becomes, instead of a charm, a mental exercise, and the efficacy of it arises not *ex opere operato*, but *ex opere operantis*."

With much truth, this opinion falls short of the whole truth, and therefore it has been made the basis of that view of the Lord's Supper which reduces it to a mere religious commemoration of the death of Christ, with this addition, that it has a *natural fitness* to produce salutary emotions, to possess our minds with religious reflections, and to strengthen virtuous resolutions. Some Divines of the Church of England, and the Socinians generally, have adopted, and endeavoured to defend, this interpretation.

The fourth opinion is that of the Reformed Churches, and was taught with great success by Calvin. It has been thus well epitomized by Dr. Hill:—

"He knew that former attempts to reconcile the systems of Luther and Zuinglius had proved fruitless. But he saw the importance of uniting Protestants upon a point, with respect to which they agreed in condemning the errors of the Church of Rome; and his zeal in renewing the attempt was probably quickened by the sincere friendship which he entertained for Melancthon, who was the successor of Luther, while he himself had succeeded Zuinglius in conducting the Reformation in Switzerland. He thought that the system of Zuinglius did not come up to the force of the expressions used in Scripture; and, although he did not approve of the manner in which the Lutherans explain these expressions, it appeared to him that there was a sense in which the full significance of them might be preserved, and a great part of the Lutheran language might continue to be used. As he agreed with Zuinglius, in thinking that the bread and wine were the signs of the body and blood of Christ, which were not locally present, he renounced both transubstantiation and consubstantiation. He agreed farther with Zuinglius, in thinking that the use of these signs, being a memorial of the sacrifice once offered on the cross, was intended to produce a moral effect. But he taught, that to all who remember the death of Christ in a proper manner, Christ, by the use of these signs, is spiritually present,—present to their minds; and he considered this spiritual presence as giving a significance, that goes far beyond the Socinian sense, to these words of Paul: 'The cup of blessing which



we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? the bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? It is not the blessing pronounced which makes any change upon the cup; but to all who join with becoming affection in the thanksgiving then uttered in the name of the congregation, Christ is spiritually present, so that they may emphatically be said to partake, *κοινωνεῖν, μετέχειν*, of his body and blood; because his body and blood being spiritually present, convey the same nourishment to their souls, the same quickening to the spiritual life, as bread and wine do to the natural life. Hence Calvin was led to connect the discourse in John vi, with the Lord's Supper; not in that literal sense which is agreeable to Popish and Lutheran ideas, as if the body of Christ was really eaten, and his blood really drunk by any; but in a sense agreeable to the expression of our Lord in the conclusion of that discourse, 'The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life;' that is, when I say to you, 'Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me and I in him; he shall live by me, for my flesh is meat indeed,' you are to understand these words, not in a literal but in a spiritual sense. The spiritual sense adopted by the Socinians is barely this, that the doctrine of Christ is the food of the soul, by cherishing a life of virtue here, and the hope of a glorious life hereafter. The Calvinists think, that into the full meaning of the figure used in these words, there enter not merely the exhortations and instructions which a belief of the Gospel affords, but also that union between Christ and his people which is the consequence of faith, and that communication of grace and strength by which they are quickened in well doing, and prepared for the discharge of every duty.

"According to this system, the full benefit of the Lord's Supper is peculiar to those who partake worthily. For while all who eat the bread and drink the wine may be said to show the Lord's death, and may also receive some devout impressions, they only to whom Jesus is spiritually present share in that spiritual nourishment which arises from partaking of his body and blood. According to this system, eating and drinking unworthily has a further sense than enters into the Socinian system; and it becomes the duty of every Christian to examine himself, not only with regard to his knowledge, but also with regard to his general conduct, before he eats of that bread and drinks of that cup. It becomes also the duty of those who have the inspection of Christian societies, to exclude from this ordinance persons, of whom there is every reason to believe that they are strangers to the sentiments which it presup-

poses, and without which none are prepared for holding that communion with Jesus which it implies.”(6)

With this view the doctrine of the Church of England seems mainly to agree, except that we may perhaps perceive in her services, a few expressions somewhat favourable to the views of Luther and Melancthon, whose authority had great weight with Archbishop Cranmer. This, however, appears only in certain phrases; for the twenty-eighth article declares with sufficient plainness, that “the body of Christ is given, taken, and eaten in the Supper only after a *heavenly* and *spiritual* manner; and the mean whereby the body of Christ is received and eaten in the Supper, is faith.” “Some of our early English Reformers,” says Bishop Tomline, “were Lutherans, and consequently they were at first disposed to lean towards consubstantiation; but they seem soon to have discovered their error, for in the articles of 1552, it is expressly said, ‘A faithful man ought not either to believe or openly confess the real and bodily presence, as they term it, of Christ’s flesh and blood in the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper.’ This part of the article was omitted in 1562, probably with a view to give less offence to those who maintained the corporal presence, and to comprehend as many as possible in the established Church.”(7) The article as it now stands, and not particular expressions in the Liturgy, must however be taken to be the opinion of the Church of England upon this point, and it substantially agrees with the New Testament.

The SACRAMENTAL character of this ordinance is the first point to be established, in order to a true conception of its nature and import. It is more than a commemorative rite, it is commemorative sacramentally; in other words, it is a commemorative sign and seal of the covenant of our redemption.

The first proof of this may be deduced from our Lord’s words used in the institution of the ordinance: “This is my body, this is my blood,” are words which show a most intimate connexion between the elements, and that which was represented by them, the *sacri-ficial* offering of the body and blood of Christ, as the price of our redemption; they were the signs of what was “given *for us*,” surrendered to death in our room and stead, that we might have the benefit of liberation from eternal death. Again, “This is the New Testament,” or covenant, “in my blood.” The covenant itself was ratified by the blood of Christ, and it is therefore called by St. Paul, “the blood of the everlasting covenant;” and the cup had so inti-

mate a connection with that covenant, as to represent it and the means of its establishment, or of its acquiring validity,—the shedding of the blood of our Saviour. It is clear, therefore, that the rite of the Lord's Supper is a *covenant* rite, and consequently a sacrament; a visible sign and seal on the part of Him who made the covenant, that it was established in, and ratified by, the sacrificial death of Christ.

As it bears this covenant or sacramental character on the part of the Institutor, so also on the part of the recipients. They were all to eat the bread in "remembrance" of Christ; in remembrance, certainly, of his death in particular; yet not as a mere historical event, but of his death as *sacrificial*; and therefore the commemoration was to be on their part an acknowledgment of the doctrine of the vicarious and propitiatory nature of the death of Christ, and an act of faith in it. Then as to the cup, they were commanded to drink of it, for a reason also particularly given, "For this is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins:" the recognition therefore, implied in the act, was not merely that Christ's blood was shed; but that it was shed as the blood of "the new covenant," and for "the remission of sins;" a recognition which could only take place in consequence of "faith in his blood," as the blood of atonement. Again, says St. Paul, as taught by the particular revelation he received as to the Lord's Supper, "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do *show* or publish the Lord's death until he come;" which publication of his death was not the mere declaration of the fact of "the Lord's death," but of his death, according to the Apostolic doctrine, as the true propitiation for sin, the benefits of which were to be received by faith. Thus then we see in the Lord's Supper, the visible token and pledge of a covenant of mercy in the blood of Christ, exhibited by God its author; and on the part of man a visible acknowledgment of this covenant so ratified by the sacrifice of Christ, and an act of entire faith in its truth and efficacy in order to the remission of sins, and the conferring of all other spiritual benefits. As a *sign*, it exhibits,

1. The infinite love of God to the world, who gave "his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him might not perish, but have everlasting life."
2. The love of Christ, who "died the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God."
3. The extreme nature of his sufferings, which were unto *death*.
4. The vicarious and sacrificial character of that death, as a sin offering and a propitiation; in virtue of which only, a covenant of grace was entered into with man by the offended God.
5. The benefits



derived from it through believing, "remission of sins;" and the nourishment of the soul in spiritual life and vigour, by virtue of a vital "communion" with Christ, so that it is advanced and perfected in holiness, "until he come" to confer upon his disciples the covenanted blessing of eternal life. As a SEAL it is a constant assurance, on the part of God, of the continuance of this covenant of redemption in full undiminished force from age to age; it is a pledge to every penitent who believes in Christ, and receives this sacrament in profession of his entire reliance upon the merits of Christ's passion for forgiveness, that he is an object of merciful regard and acceptance; there is in it also, as to every one who thus believes and is accepted, a constant exhibition of Christ as the spiritual food of the soul, to be received by faith, that he may grow thereby; and a renewed assurance of the bestowment of the full grace of the new covenant, in the accomplishment of all its promises, both in this life and in that which is to come. In every celebration, the *sign* of all these gracious acts, provisions, and hopes, is exhibited, and God condescends thus to repeat his *pledges* of faithfulness and love to the Church of Christ, purchased by his blood. The members of that Church, on the other hand, renew their acceptance of, and reliance upon, the new covenant; they publish their faith in Christ; they glory in his *cross*, his sacrificial though shameful death, as the wisdom of God, and the power of God; they feast upon the true passover victim by their faith, and they do this with *joy and thanksgiving*, on account of a greater deliverance than that of the Israelites from Egypt, of which they are the subjects. It was this predominance of thanksgiving in celebrating this hallowed rite, which at so early a period of the Church attached to the Lord's Supper the title of "*The Eucharist*."

We may conclude this view by a few general observations.

1. The very nature of the ordinance of the Lord's Supper excludes from participating in it not only open unbelievers, but all who reject the doctrine of the atonement made by the vicarious death of Christ for "the remission of sins." Such persons have indeed tacitly acknowledged this, by reducing the rite to a mere commemoration of the fact of Christ's death, and of those virtues of humility, benevolence, and patience, which his sufferings called forth. If therefore the Lord's Supper be in truth much more than this; if it recognise the sacrificial character of Christ's death, and the doctrine of "faith in his blood," as necessary to our salvation, this is "an altar of which they have no right to eat" who reject these doctrines: and from the Lord's table all such persons ought

to be repelled by ministers, whenever, from compliance with custom, or other motives, they would approach it.

2. It is equally evident that when there is no evidence in persons of true repentance for sin, and of desire for salvation, according to the terms of the Gospel, they are disqualified from partaking at "the table of the Lord." They eat and drink unworthily, and fall therefore into "condemnation." The whole act is indeed on their part an act of bold profanation or of hypocrisy; they profess by this act to repent, and have no sorrow for sin; they profess to seek deliverance from its guilt and power, and yet remain willingly under its bondage; they profess to trust in Christ's death for pardon, and are utterly unconcerned respecting either; they profess to feed upon Christ, and hunger and thirst after nothing but the world; they place before themselves the sufferings of Christ; but when they "look upon him whom they have pierced," they do not "mourn because of him," and they grossly offend the all-present Majesty of heaven, by thus making light of Christ, and "grieving the Holy Spirit."

3. It is a part of Christian discipline in every religious society to prevent such persons from communicating with the Church. They are expressly excluded by Apostolic authority, as well as by the original institution of this sacrament, which was confined to Christ's disciples; and ministers would "partake of other men's sins," if knowingly they were to admit to the Supper of the Lord, those who in their spirit and lives deny him.

4. On the other hand, the table of the Lord is not to be surrounded with superstitious terrors. All are welcome there who truly love Christ, and all who sincerely desire to love, serve, and obey him. All truly penitent persons; all who feel the burden of their sins, and are willing to renounce them; all who take Christ as the sole foundation of their hope, and are ready to commit their eternal interests to the merits of his sacrifice and intercession, are to be encouraged to "draw near with faith, and to take this holy sacrament to their comfort." In it God visibly exhibits and confirms his covenant to them, and he invites them to become parties to it, by the act of their receiving the elements of the sacrament *in faith*.

5. For the frequency of celebrating this ordinance we have no rule in the New Testament. The early Christians observed it every Sabbath, and exclusion from it was considered a severe sentence of the Church, when only temporary. The expression of the Apostle, "as often as ye eat this bread," intimates that the practice of communion was frequent; and perhaps the general

custom in this country of a monthly administration, will come up to the spirit of the ancient institution. That it was designed, like the Passover, to be an annual celebration only, has no evidence from Scripture, and is contradicted by the most ancient practice.

6. The habitual neglect of this ordinance by persons who profess a true faith in Christ, is highly censurable. We speak not now of Quakers and Mystics, who reject it altogether, in the face of the letter of their Bibles; but of many who seldom or never communicate, principally from habits of inattention to an obligation which they do not profess to deny. In this case a plain command of Christ is violated, though not perhaps with direct intention; and the benefit of that singularly affecting mean of grace is lost, in which our Saviour renews to us the pledges of his love, repeats the promises of his covenant, and calls for invigorated exercises of our faith, only to feed us the more richly with the bread that comes down from heaven. If a peculiar condemnation falls upon them who partake “unworthily,” then a peculiar blessing must follow from partaking worthily; and it therefore becomes the duty of every minister to explain the obligation, and to show the advantages of this sacrament, and earnestly to enforce its regular observance upon all those who give satisfactory evidence of “repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.”

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